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CARDINAL ELEMENTS  
OF THE  
CHRISTIAN FAITH



# CARDINAL ELEMENTS

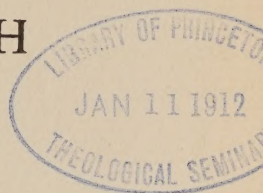
OF THE

# CHRISTIAN FAITH

BY THE REV. ✓

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ORMOND COLLEGE, MELBOURNE



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DEDICATED TO

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MASTER OF ORMOND COLLEGE, AND VICE-CHANCELLOR OF MELBOURNE  
UNIVERSITY

WITH ESTEEM AND AFFECTION





## PREFACE

THE following lectures were delivered to students of all Faculties attending Melbourne University and in residence at Ormond College during the winter of 1910.

The lectures were given as talks or spoken addresses on Thursday evenings at the College, and, owing to the exigencies of time, had to be somewhat curtailed in delivery. They are here printed in full, in the hope that they may be found of interest and use to inquiring minds among the undergraduates at our universities and other thoughtful youths.

The standpoint of the writer is that of the Catholic creed of Christendom as he understands it. His aim has been to set forth the main elements of that creed in such a way as to bring out their harmony with the scientific and philosophic thought of our time.

The recognition of Christ as the Incarnate Word of God and the only Mediator of Salvation to sinful men is, in the writer's view, the Rock-Truth on which the Christian Church is built.

This conception of the Person of Christ he therefore regards as of central significance for a constructive Christian theology.

But while he has sought to set forth this view of Christ's Person with unmistakable clearness, he has tried to do so in such a way as does not remove Jesus Christ from the human sphere or nullify His true humanity. To present an intelligible view of Christ's Person such as conserves His true deity and central and unique significance for world-history, and yet at the same time does not nullify or render meaningless His true humanity as an historic human individual, is the critical problem of Christology.

How far the view presented by the writer in these lectures may help towards a solution of this problem, the reader must judge.

The feature in his treatment of the Person of Christ which may perhaps strike some readers as having most appearance of novelty is the insistence laid on the thought that we

cannot apprehend the full significance of Christ's Person as the Divine Logos incarnate if we isolate Him from the body of redeemed humanity, of which He is the living Head—that Kingdom of God, of which He is the King.

This may seem to suggest the idea, associated with the Hegelian Idealistic philosophy, that the true Incarnation of the Divine Logos is to be found, not in a solitary individual among men, but in the perfected human society which is the Divine goal of world-history.

The writer confesses to having considerable leanings towards a thoroughgoing Idealism as the only philosophy or metaphysic which gives hope of furnishing a rational ground for the affirmations of Christian faith. As will be seen, however, from these lectures, he does not accept or endorse all that goes by the name of "Hegelianism" either in philosophy or theology.

As regards the point above mentioned it does not seem to him that the two conceptions—that of the Incarnation of the Divine Logos in Christ as an historic individual, and that of the Incarnation or full



expression of the Divine Logos in a perfected human Society or Kingdom of God—are necessarily incompatible, so that they should be put in sharp antithesis to one another. He believes that “the Word was made flesh,” and dwelt among us in the historic personality of Jesus Christ. But he believes that this Incarnation of the Divine Logos in an historic individual was the prelude and necessary instrumental means to His Incarnation or indwelling in a perfected human society—those “many sons” whom it is Christ’s function as Redeemer to bring “unto glory.”

If we are in earnest in regarding the Church or perfected human society as a living organism of which Jesus Christ is the Head, then the conception of the Incarnation of the Divine Logos in Christ should not exclude, but rather carry with it, the thought of this wider Incarnation or self-expression of the Divine Logos in the perfected human society which is the goal of the Divine purpose in world-history. Until this goal is reached, the purpose of the Incarnation of the Divine Word in the historic individual, Jesus Christ, cannot be said to

have been fully realised. In a true sense, Christ, the Incarnate Word, lives in His Church, so that its history is His history.

Notes or essays—in some cases running to considerable length—on some points of difficulty or importance referred to in the lectures have been added in an appendix.

The writer gratefully acknowledges his indebtedness to Rev. W. D. McLaren, M.A., Professor of New Testament Exegesis in the Congregational College, Melbourne, for some useful suggestions, especially bearing on matters handled in Lecture V, to Rev. Professor W. P. Paterson, D.D., LL.D., of Edinburgh University, Rev. J. McKellar Stewart, M.A., and Mr. D. D. Munro, M.A., of Ormond College, for kindly revising the proofs, and to Mr. Munro also for the pains he has taken to provide an excellent index.

D. S. ADAM.

ORMOND COLLEGE,  
MELBOURNE, 1911.





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ON THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION  
OF GOD





# I

## ON THE CHRISTIAN CONCEPTION OF GOD

I WELCOME the opportunity afforded me by the Master of Ormond of giving a short series of addresses to the students of this college on the great subject of Religion. For our views on religion, whether we think them out into a system or not, lie at the base of our character and conduct, and serve to make us the men we are and become.

You are looking forward to occupying different spheres of usefulness in this great Commonwealth as lawyers, doctors, engineers, and, in some cases, as ministers of religion. In the pursuit of your various callings you will meet and have to deal with influences of different kinds which tend to shake or subvert faith in the religious view of life, and particularly in that religious view which is identified with the name of Christianity.

Having regard to this fact, it has seemed

to me that the most useful thing I could do would be to deal in a consecutive way with some of the cardinal points of the Christian faith, not exhaustively indeed, or as one would do before a class of theological students, but rather suggestively, concentrating attention on points of living, present-day interest, with the aim of showing that the Christian view of life is a reasonable one in the light of the science and philosophy of our time, as well as a view that is fitted to be practically helpful in the conduct of life.

To a young friend who was disquieted in his religious views by the Evolutionary Theory, and who consulted Charles Darwin as to what he ought to believe, the sage is said to have replied that the ultimate problem of existence seemed to him to lie beyond the range of the human intellect. "But," he added, "man can do his duty."

This may be good practical advice for those whose minds are in a state of perplexity as to ultimate questions in the sphere of religion or philosophy. But I think it can be shown that the very conception of duty, and the obligation we are under to do it, involves theological implicates of one kind or another without which no

solid ground can be found whereon to base duty or the precepts of morality. Of this, however, we shall speak more at length in other lectures.

The theme of these lectures, then, is the reasonableness and the practical worth or effectiveness of the Christian faith as a guide in the conduct of life.

What, then, let us ask at the outset, are the essential features of the religion known as Christianity ?

If we look at religions generally and compare them with one another, we shall find, broadly speaking, three characteristic elements common to all religions, which seem therefore to enter into the very essence of religion as a phenomenon of human life.

(1) Underlying all religions there is, in the first place, a feeling of dependence on some power or powers above ourselves, but manifested in our experience, of which some more or less adequate conception is formed and to which a certain controlling authority over our life is attributed. Hereby is given the conception of God which, under very varied forms, is a characteristic of religions generally.

(2) There is, secondly, a sense of want,

or imperfection of the personal life, together with some conception of the good that is needed to satisfy this want, and which the higher power manifested in experience is supposed to be able to furnish. Hereby is given the conception of the *summum bonum*, or highest good, which under various forms is sought in all religions.

(3) And there is, in the third place, an attitude of will and of feeling taken up towards the higher power or powers believed in—a yielding of the will in humble self-surrender, an outgoing of the feeling either in slavish fear or in loving trust—which finds expression in acts of worship in which we seek to maintain and promote fellowship between our finite spirits and God.

Let us now concentrate our attention on Christianity with reference to these fundamental characteristics of religion in general. (1) As regards its conception of God, the Christian religion conceives of the ultimate power which is manifested in all nature and history as personal spirit, infinite in love as in power—"the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth"; (2) As regards its conception of the highest good for man, Christianity conceives of

this, not as mere material blessings, but as redemption from sin and death into fellowship with God in a perfect and eternal kingdom—this kingdom being conceived of as realised through the work of Jesus Christ and of the indwelling Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, Who, together with the Father Almighty, constitute the Triune God of Christian faith; (3) As regards the attitude of will and feeling taken up towards God, the Christian religion inculcates an entire yielding up of the individual self to God in cheerful self-surrender, and a feeling of loving trust in the self-revealing God of grace, manifesting itself in appropriate acts of worship and devotion.

This analysis furnishes us with the cardinal points in the Christian faith to which I wish to invite your attention.

The first article of the Christian faith is, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

This supplies us with the Christian conception of the Supreme Power on which we and all things depend, and of the relation in which this Supreme Power stands to the material world and to ourselves as finite spirits,



This present lecture will be occupied with considering the Christian conception of the Supreme Power in contrast with other conceptions that have been put forward. In the next lecture I shall consider the Christian conception of the relation of this Supreme Power, or God, to the world. Then in the next two lectures I shall deal briefly with the Christian conceptions of man and of sin, and in the two following with the Christian conception of Jesus Christ and His work. The seventh and concluding lecture will deal with the appropriation of redemption.

Of course, in these addresses, we can touch only briefly on leading points in connection with these great themes, and my aim is to be practically helpful rather than to attempt anything like completeness of treatment.

The Christian view of God as the "Father Almighty" implies that the power, not myself, on which I feel my dependence, and on which, too, depends all that is presented to me in my conscious experience as an ordered external material world of things and persons in space and time, is a personal Spirit, infinite in love and in power, with whom I, as a personal, self-

conscious spirit, can have intelligible intercourse.

The characteristic features or attributes of personality, as we know it imperfectly from our own experience, are (1) self-consciousness or thought; (2) self-determination or will; (3) emotion or feeling; and (4) unity. These all we attribute to God, the Supreme Power, whom we conceive of as distinguishable in some way alike from the material world which is His creature and instrument, and from the finite spirit or mind—that individual ego or self which is the subject of self-conscious experience for each individual human being.

The significance of this conception of God, the Supreme Reality, may best be brought out by contrasting it with other alternative views of the ultimate reality which have been put forward in the name of science or philosophy.

I. In the first place, there is the view known as *Materialism*, to which those who are much engrossed with the study of nature and the physical sciences are apt to gravitate.

When I analyse my knowledge or conscious experience I find, as at least part thereof, knowledge of an objective world of material bodies existing in time and occupying space.

Over against this changing world of material things there is given a knowledge of myself as permanent underlying subject of all conscious experience.

Now Materialism, as a philosophy, tries to overcome this dualism between mind and matter—the individual self-conscious ego, and the material world—by denying the independent reality of the ego or self, and reducing it to a form or function of matter, the one reality.

On this view the start in explaining the existing universe, of which we know ourselves to form a part, is made from matter—blind, unconscious matter—conceived of as self-existent and eternal, and acting under a law of its being—the “law of substance.”

Out of this, by a gradual process of evolution, has come the whole universe of being, with all its manifold forms and functions, including self-conscious thought and feeling and will. These are but functions of highly organised collocations of matter, though erroneously supposed to indicate and belong to immaterial substances called souls or spirits. Such so-called souls or spirits are but figments of the imagination, as is also their supposed power of self-determination, or freedom to act otherwise than as deter-

mined by the mechanical law of necessary physical causation, which determines the behaviour of all particles of matter.

And as finite souls are explained away as fictitious, so also is it with the infinite soul or spirit we call God. There is neither need nor room for such a Being in the universe of self-existent matter, determined by its own inherent law of substance or necessary causation.

There were hints of such evolutionary materialism in ancient times in the atomic theory of Democritus and Lucretius. It receives its fullest development and exposition in modern times in the materialistic monism of Haeckel and his school.

But this pan-materialism is far from affording an explanation of the known universe which is satisfactory to the mind of the thinking man, not to speak of the conscience and heart of the moral and religious man.

(1) It fails to satisfy the intellect in its search after a sufficient cause or explanation of the world we know.

(a) Its starting-point, "matter," assumed as a self-existent, ultimate reality apart from mind as knower, seems to afford a simple, natural starting-point for a con-

structive explanation of the universe. In truth, however, "matter" is one of the obscurest and most elusive of the things we know or suppose we know. The old idea of an immense number of minute and indivisible solid particles or atoms of matter which Democritus made the starting-point of his theory, explaining the ordered world of nature as having arisen through fortuitous concourse of these indivisible atoms, is exploded by the modern view of matter, which teaches us to see in the so-called "atom," not an ultimate and indivisible solid particle from which a start can be made, but the centre of a multiplicity of electrons, or moving forces of the nature of electricity.

(b) Further, matter, whatever it may be supposed to be, exists, as we know it, only as an object of perception and knowledge to a percipient and knowing mind.

This fact, that matter as we know it, *i.e.* with definite qualities, exists only for a knowing mind, seems strange and unconvincing to the unreflecting; but no fact is more certain or more clearly demonstrable.

The secondary qualities which the ordinary consciousness supposes to inhere in matter—such as colour, taste, hardness, softness,



etc.—can be seen on very little reflection to consist really of subjective sensations of a percipient mind, without which they could have no existence.

And a careful examination into the so-called primary qualities of matter—such as extension and duration—reveals that these are at bottom constituted by relation, and can have no meaning or reality except for a mind that can relate impressions of sense to itself and to one another.

The quality of extension has meaning and reality only for a mind capable of relating impressions together under the perceptive form of *space*, while the quality of *duration* in like manner has meaning and reality only for a mind that can relate impressions together under the perceptive form of *time*.<sup>1</sup> Therefore the starting-point of the explanation—existent matter having certain qualities—already presupposes the existence of the thing you seek to evolve out of it, viz. the percipient, knowing mind, for which alone it has existence as a *known* thing. You can never make a start in explaining the origin of self-conscious mind from anything which can only be con-

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Campbell Fraser's "Philosophy of Theism," First Series, pp. 121-125.

ceived of as an object of knowledge to a knowing mind, without arguing in a vicious circle.

(c) But even supposing we were to grant, for the sake of argument, the independent existence of innumerable atoms of matter as eternal or self-existent—though this is a concession we are not rationally entitled to make—the materialist needs to postulate also, as self-existent and eternal, another thing, *force*, without which *matter*, which is inert, could not get into motion.

And to explain the ordered world which arises in the course of evolution, the forces presupposed as operating within or upon matter cannot rationally be supposed to work anyhow without plan or purpose, but only according to law, or as directed.

This leads up inevitably to reason or intelligence as that which directs the force operative in and upon matter. And so we find materialists like Haeckel driven in the end to postulate intelligence, or the qualities of spirit, as inherent from the first in the original matter or atoms from which the evolutionary process starts, and as guiding the whole course of the evolution. “Even the atom,” he says, “is not without a rudimentary form of sensation and will,

or, as it is better expressed, of feeling and inclination; that is, a universal 'soul' of the simplest character."<sup>1</sup>

With this surreptitious importation of the qualities of spirit—sensation, will, feeling, inclination—into his original world-stuff or initial atoms, Haeckel finds it possible to get them into motion. It is, in reality, "*Spirit*" in its most elementary or latent form that moves the material atoms that are conceived of as having rudimentary "souls."

But on this view Haeckel's primitive world-stuff, conceived of as the first embodiment of infinite, immanent *reason* or spirit, becomes a complex philosophical conception requiring analysis. It is, in fact, not unlike the conception of the primitive world-stuff reached along Biblical and theological lines, which leads us to think of the Divine Logos, or Word, or Reason, as *immanent* in matter from the first, and guiding its evolution.

The primitive matter, out of which the universe is supposed to have evolved by a gradual process of evolution from within, acquires an altogether new significance when that matter is conceived of as em-

<sup>1</sup> "Riddle of the Universe," ch. xii.

bodying reason or the qualities of spirit under the forms of space and time.

We only need to press the point that the qualities of spirit, however they may be thought of as inhering or being immanent in extended matter, or the evolving material world, have their ultimate source or home in *spirit*, which, while immanent in the evolving material world, is not confined or shut up therein, but exists and works also in a way that is transcendent.

The conception of the gradual unfolding under the forms of space and time of the eternal reason or Word in which the Supreme Spirit, God, expresses and reveals Himself, is an idea not so far removed from the Biblical conception of the creation and progressive development of the world.

In claiming for his original atoms of matter a sort of "soul" with rudimentary powers of sensation and will, or feeling and inclination, Haeckel practically gives up the thoroughgoing materialism which endeavours to explain soul or spirit as a mere product of blind, unconscious atoms of extended matter.

(2) Monistic materialism, while it fails to satisfy the inquiring mind in its search after an explanation of the origin and

development of the world, still more conspicuously fails to satisfy the conscience and the heart of man.

Conscience assures us as individuals that we are free spirits, above the law of necessary physical causation and under a law of moral obligation to do the right and avoid the wrong which we may or may not obey as free agents.

This law of moral obligation is not imposed on us like a law of nature which secures its own fulfilment by an inevitable mechanical necessity. It is a law under which we, as moral and responsible agents with free wills, are conscious of being. It points us to a supreme holy will as the source of this law of moral obligation—a will which it is our duty as moral beings to obey, though, not being under any physical compulsion or necessity, we may disobey.

This supreme holy will can be thought of by us only as the will of a supreme personal being with whom our moral consciousness brings us into immediate relationship.

(3) In denying or ignoring such a personal God, together with the prospect of immortality for individual persons in fellowship with Him, materialism further fails to



satisfy the religious aspirations of the *heart* of man, which cries out for the living God and for fellowship with Him as life's chief good.

It thus minimises the dignity of man, and makes out his life to be a mean and unimportant thing, which tends in practice to make it worthless, and destroys the springs of noble, useful, and effective practical living.

II. At the opposite extreme from materialism is the view known as "idealism," which may be called also "pan-egoism," in contrast with "pan-materialism."

While materialism takes its start in explaining the universe from the *object* or not-self given in conscious experience—viz. extended matter—and seeks to explain all out of this, idealism takes its start from the ego or self, given as the *subject* in our self-conscious experience.

The existence of this "ego" as substantial reality is that which is most surely and clearly certified to me in my conscious experience. "I think, therefore I am," is the starting-point for a philosophical construction of reality. In fact, all I know or can know, it is said, is the existence of this "ego" which I call my "self," and of a great

variety of feelings or sense-impressions belonging to this ego or of which it is the subject. These feelings or sense-impressions from which all our knowledge of reality is got, however they may be caused or occasioned, which is obscure, are certainly not outside of or apart from myself. They are but phases or modifications of the self-conscious ego or mind that knows.

It is true that, by an unaccountable instinct and by application of inherent forms of perception and cognition belonging to the structure of mind, I build up out of this given manifold of sense-impressions or feelings an ordered world of things in space and time, causally related together, which somehow I come to think of as existing outside of and apart from myself; but this apparent externality of the material world to my mind or self-conscious ego is a delusion. I cannot really perceive or know anything as existing outside of or independently of my mind or self, and that is not an object or thing existing alongside other things in space and time, like the material body which in some mysterious way I associate with my *self*, but the permanent subject of all actual or possible conscious states and experiences, within whose ambit all that

exists or can exist for me must be capable of being brought. The knowing subject or self can never get beyond a knowledge of itself and its feelings or ideas or states of consciousness. Out of these feelings or states of the self, therefore, the so-called external world of material things in manifold relations must somehow be built up by the activity of the knowing mind.

The material world, on this view, seems to be reduced to a complex collocation of states or feelings of the ego of our self-consciousness. Its apparent objectivity is illusory, and due to the active constructive imagination of the ego. This view of the universe, which reduces all to unity by interpreting all as manifestations of the ego or mind revealed to us in our self-conscious experience, seems strange and unfamiliar and absurd, especially to those not given to philosophical reflection. In reality, however, this pan-egoism has more philosophical standing-ground and justification than pan-materialism, inasmuch as it takes its start from what is undoubtedly more clearly and directly known to us than matter, viz. the thinking self or ego.

In its cruder form, known as "subjective" or "individualistic" idealism, this theory assumes that the ego or self revealed

to each thinking being in his self-conscious experience is a limited, finite, individual substance of a spiritual kind—a soul or “monad” associated in some mysterious way with a bodily form—and that there are many such individual “egos,” “souls,” or “monads” existing alongside of and independent of each other in the universe, each generating for itself its own world of conscious experience. The relation of these numerous “souls” or “monads” to each other and to the whole or universe of which they form parts is, however, left without satisfactory explanation. God is brought in, in an external sort of way, as a kind of *Deus ex machina*, by whom, somehow, the separate souls or monads, with their varying self-conscious experiences, are held together and made to work out a pre-established order or harmony in a spirit-controlled universe.

The philosophical systems of Berkeley and Leibnitz may be taken as examples of such subjective idealism, with God brought in in a more or less external way, which is not clearly elucidated, to give unity and harmony to the whole.

In its deeper and subtler form, known as “absolute idealism,” the self revealed to

each thinking being in his self-conscious experience is identified with the universal self who is the source of all reality and of all knowledge, *i.e.* God.

This leads up from pan-egoism of a subjective, individualistic type to a subtle form of pantheism or panentheism, which will fall to be dealt with under the next heading.

III. A third attempt to reduce the three realities postulated in ordinary thought—viz. the individual self, the material world, and God—to a rationally thought-out unity, is made in various theories of the universe which go by the general name of pantheism.

While materialism takes its start from extended matter given as the object in our conscious experience and says, in the end, “all is matter,” and while subjective idealism starts from the ego given as subject and reaches the conclusion that “all is self,” pantheism, in its typical modern form, as represented by Spinoza, takes its start from a supposed impersonal substance which is neither the “self” nor the “material world” of our conscious experience, but the background and source of both. It gives to this supposed impersonal substance the name of “God,” and seeks to



exhibit in a rational way that "all is God, or necessary manifestations of God."

The material world on the one hand, and finite self-conscious spirits on the other, have no real substantial existence on this view. They are but modes or manifestations of an infinite impersonal substance which has extension as one of its attributes and thought as another, but which itself is neither extended matter nor self-conscious, thinking mind, but the potential ground of both.

Now, there are undoubted elements of truth in the pantheistic mode of thought which harmonise with Christian faith. It emphasises, for one thing, the ultimate unity of all reality. And to this extent it is right and true. We feel ourselves to be indeed separate souls—individuals ; but that is only a partial account of our nature. Deep below our separation there is a connection between our life and the universal life around us. We cannot cast ourselves off either from man or from nature. Again, pantheism emphasises the dependence of every finite thing and person upon God, and His presence everywhere ; and here again it is right and true. God is not, as the Deists were wont to think, "an absentee



God, sitting idle outside of His universe ever since the first Sabbath, and seeing it go"; He is immanent in all creaturely being, present in everything that is or lives.

His will is the true efficient cause underlying all evolution, and giving such force or effectiveness to so-called natural causes as they possess. And if He has endowed human beings with free wills like His own, so that they can become original causes of events or happenings not planned or caused by His will—such as sin—yet this subordinate causality granted to free agents, though its use by men may have important consequences as regards their own individual welfare or happiness, cannot permanently frustrate the sovereignty or supreme causal activity of God in His universe. But while it contains much that is true, pantheism, in its typical Spinozistic form, is in serious error and in contradiction with the moral and religious consciousness of man at various points.

It is in error in denying self-conscious personal life to the Supreme Being, in whom we and all things live and move. Impersonal substance is too low a category of thought by which to seek to grasp the

fulness of the Living Reality that finds self-expression in this wonderful universe and its history. We need to apply the highest category of thought available to us, and that is the category of self-conscious, self-determining, personal life. Even this, as we are able to conceive of it, may fall short of grasping the fulness of that reality, inasmuch as our experience and conception of self-conscious personal life is but inadequate and imperfect because of our finitude.

But it is the highest conception available to us under which to think of the Supreme Being. And to attempt to think of the Supreme Reality under any lower category of thought, such as that of impersonal substance, is certainly fallacious and misleading. The Supreme Being is *at least* self-conscious and personal. To think of Him as *less* than this is to think of Him unworthily. We may not be able to think or imagine clearly how self-conscious personality may be realised in an Infinite Being, from our own experience of limited self-consciousness and personality in our finite mode of life; we may not be able to place ourselves at the central standpoint of the supreme, self-conscious, personal spirit,

or view all things *sub specie æternitatis*, as the pantheist tries to do; but, however self-consciousness and personality may find expression in the Infinite God, we may rest assured we can look up to Him with reverent trust as no blind, impersonal substance or force, but all that a perfect person can be to us, the Father Almighty—our Father in heaven.

Pantheism is in error also in so far as it conceives God as bound up somehow within the laws of nature which express His will, and as incapable of modifying these, or of acting in a transcendent way on the system of natural causes, should His will and purpose at any time require it. God cannot be thus shut up within nature, as though He were the subject of an externally imposed necessity. He is immanent in nature, it is true, and causally at work in all that goes on there; but He is transcendent over nature also, capable of superimposing His free almighty will in such a way as to modify normal processes and mould events, should His purpose require it, though always acting in accordance with His wise and holy character, and never in mere caprice.

Again, pantheism is in error in reducing

man, or the finite human spirit, to a mere mode or phase of the Divine Being, without any independent reality or freedom or causal efficiency. To deny true personality and freedom and responsibility to men as individual self-conscious beings is to undermine human morality and to ignore the most unequivocal deliverances of our moral consciousness.

Good and evil, on this view, are but different manifestations of one absolute principle or reality. The purest, holiest feelings and the worst passions, the kindest, loving actions and the vilest deeds of selfishness performed by men, are all alike states and operations of one absolute Being, all alike inevitable and all alike beyond praise or blame. Such a view is untenable, as contradicting the ultimate deliverances of our moral consciousness.

And further, in denying true personality and substantial reality to finite human spirits and making these but fleeting manifestations or modes of the Infinite Spirit, pantheism removes from men the hope of individual immortality. The only immortality which pantheism permits of is absorption into the infinite impersonal sub-

stance, and this fails to satisfy the religious aspirations of the noblest of men.

IV. An attempt to correct the defects of Spinozistic pantheism and to set forth a pantheism or panentheism which finds room for self-conscious personality and freedom alike in God the Infinite Spirit and in individual men as finite spirits is made in the system of "absolute idealism" associated with the names of Fichte and Hegel in Germany, and of Green, John and Edward Caird, and Henry Jones in Britain. This theory differs from that of subjective or individualistic idealism inasmuch as it conceives of the ego or self, revealed to each thinking being in his self-conscious experience, not as a particular finite self associated with a particular bodily organism, but as the universal self, common alike to all thinking beings, and constitutive at once of their finite personalities and of the objective material world which seems to oppose a limit to these personalities. The self which is the permanent subject of all actual and possible conscious experience is, in fact, none other than the self of God, the Supreme Spirit, the source of all reality and of all knowledge, in whom we all "live and move and have our being."



In self-conscious experience and knowledge—in so far as we feel and think and will aright or in a normal way—we are admitted as finite individuals into unity with the eternal life—the feeling, thought, and will—of God, the Omnipresent Spirit. We live a life that is “universal” when we think. God, in fact, lives in us and works through us; and there is no distinction between the “self” of our conscious experience, when we feel and think truly and will aright, and the very “self” of God.

We, indeed, identify the “self” revealed in our self-conscious mental experience with a particular bodily organism in the world of things in space and time.

This is what gives to the “self” of which we are conscious the appearance of finiteness and individuality as external to or exclusive of the “self” in other finite persons. In truth, however, the “self” which is the subject in all knowledge is the same reality in all individuals who participate in knowledge. That is why our knowledge is not relative to one particular “ego” or individual thinker, but valid for all thinkers alike.

Instead of a pre-established harmony



arranged by God, as a *Deus ex machina* between the order of things in the real world and the order of feelings and thoughts that arise in the mental world of the individual thinking spirit, there is presented to us the idea that the order of things in the real world is due to the thought and will of God, the supreme self-conscious Ego or Person, and that finite human beings as they rise in self-conscious experience and wider knowledge enter more fully into union with God, and participate in the feelings, thoughts, and volitions of the very *self* of God, the Source and Soul of the whole universe.

This view of the fundamental unity or identity of the "self" of God with the "self" of normal man in his self-conscious spiritual life is not without a measure of support in the deliverances of the religious consciousness.

Jesus Christ, the perfect man, it is pointed out, though associated with a particular finite bodily organism here on earth, like other men, yet did not conceive of Himself as finite and limited in terms of that particular bodily organism in space and time; but as one with God, or with the Logos or Word of God, Who dwelt in all nature as well as in

the particular bodily organism which He associated with Himself as a man among men.

As Son of Man His consciousness of *self* was not disparate or distinct from His consciousness of *God*. He claimed for Himself, as perfect, sinless, normal man, such unity with Supreme God in selfhood that He could say, "I and the Father are one."<sup>1</sup> And He taught His disciples, as individual men, to claim for themselves, through faith-union with Him and participation in His Spirit, a like position in relation to God as sons, indwelt by the one Holy Spirit or "universal self" Who dwells in God and in all good men.

St. Paul also, it is said, gives a certain countenance to this doctrine of a "universal self" underlying and grounding the particular phenomenal self revealed in each man's self-conscious experience, when he says of God, "In Him we live, and move, and have our being"<sup>2</sup>; and again, when in religious faith he so identifies himself with the Divine Self present in Christ Jesus as to say, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."<sup>3</sup>

And in various works of modern psycho-

<sup>1</sup> John x. 30.

<sup>2</sup> Acts xvii. 28.

<sup>3</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

logy use is made of the hypothesis of a sub-liminal or sub-conscious self as underlying the particular finite phenomenal self given in each man's conscious experience.

Dr. Sanday, in his recent work on "Christologies: Ancient and Modern," makes use of this hypothesis of the sub-conscious self in endeavouring to construct a reasonable doctrine of the person of Christ in its human and divine aspects.

In the case of the man Christ Jesus, he suggests, the sub-conscious self underlying and finding progressive manifestation in the human conscious self was none other than the "universal self" of the Divine Logos. And the thought is suggested that this "universal self" of the Divine Logos may be the sub-conscious self of other self-conscious human beings also, which will be realised or come to consciousness in them in proportion as through faith-union with Christ they become partakers of "that same mind" which was in Him. Christ Jesus as a man, it is alleged, differed from other men not in His essential nature as human, for He was true man, but in the extent and degree to which, as Son of Man, He realised the very self of God, or of the Divine Logos, as lying at the root of His

being as a man, and gave effect to this in practical human life.

The philosophical theory of absolute idealism is thus not without a certain measure of support in the utterances and experiences of the religious consciousness. As regards the conception of Christ's person in relation to God and to other men more will fall to be said later. Meantime the difficulties of this theory as a professedly rational and intelligible philosophical theory must not be minimised. Chief among these is the difficulty of explaining and expounding in a satisfactory way the relation between the finite self of the individual man and the infinite universal self of God—both of which are represented as “given” in some way in the fact of self-conscious experience—without destroying the reality of one or other.

An identification of man and God, of human self-hood, or personality, and divine, is difficult if not impossible to think out in any intelligible, rational way which will not in effect subvert either the one or the other.

On the one hand, if we lay emphasis on the universal self of the divine self-consciousness as the only real “ego” in self-

conscious experience—the one true reality—then the finite spirit of individual man would seem to be reduced in a pantheistic fashion to a mere mode of the divine self-consciousness without reality or freedom or responsibility.

On the other hand, if the stress is laid on the reality of the finite human ego in self-conscious experience, then God would seem to be excluded from reality except as the impersonal force or spirit which rises to self-consciousness in the progressive spiritual experience of individual men and human society. We find both these tendencies at work among those who endeavour to carry out the principles of an absolute idealism in the explanation of the universe. But no explanation of the problem of ultimate reality can be satisfactory which either denies personality and freedom and responsibility to men as moral agents, or self-conscious personality and freedom to God as Supreme Spirit.

We may perhaps rise to the heights of “absolute idealism” in the rapture of religious faith, but the philosopher is yet to appear of whom it can be said that he has succeeded in presenting this religious “panentheism” as an intelligible reasoned-



out system of philosophic thought.<sup>1</sup> The materialist confesses as his creed, "I believe in unconscious moving matter as the ultimate source of reality from which all springs and to which all returns"; the subjective idealist says, "I believe in the individual ego of my self-conscious experience as the source of all reality known or knowable by me"; the pantheist declares, "I believe in the universal impersonal substance out of which both mind and matter with their phenomena emerge as the underlying source of all"; the absolute idealist says, "I believe in the universal self with whom I and all men are one in the experience of self-conscious rational life as the one supreme reality." Over against these philosophic monists of various types the Christian believer affirms, as his creed, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, Who is not to be confused or identified either with the material world or with the finite self of my self-conscious experience, as the one living and true God to whom be glory for ever."

V. The difficulty of reaching a complete and adequate rational conception of God, the supreme reality, in relation to the

<sup>1</sup> On "Absolute Idealism." See further, Note B in Appendix.



material world and the thinking ego or self has led many to adopt the attitude known as "agnosticism" in relation to the ultimate reality. Huxley and Spencer and their followers declare that God, the ultimate reality, is altogether unknown and unknowable by us men, so that we cannot make any affirmations concerning, or ascribe any attributes to, this supposed reality.

"When you go one step beyond the mundane system as presented in sense-experience," says Hume, "you only excite an inquisitive humour which it is impossible ever to satisfy."

The logical outcome of this "agnostic" attitude in regard to all supposed reality which is not given in sense-experience, is the universal scepticism of Hume. This goes much further than that of Huxley or Spencer, and involves the complete disintegration, not of theology only, but of all knowledge.

For our so-called scientific knowledge, which we find of the greatest service to us in the conduct of life, not less than our theological knowledge, rests ultimately on a basis of reasonable faith, the faith, viz. that the world we have to do with has

reason at the base of it, and so may be interpreted by rational mind in a way that may be relied on for practical purposes.

The principle of the uniformity of nature, on which all science is built up, is not something we know or can know from sense-experience, which can only furnish us with ever new items of experience, not with any universal or necessary law.

It is, in fact, an ultimate assumption of faith which is Theistic in principle—a faith in the reasonableness and trustworthiness of nature as the expression of absolute reason.

Were it not for this faith in absolute reason as underlying or governing nature, all our experiences of one phenomenon following another in the past would not justify us in drawing the conclusion that it would follow in the future, or in acting with confidence on any such expectation.

The sun may have risen every morning during the days of our past life, but if there be no permanent reason at the root of things all may be upset or changed at any moment. We have no warrant for saying we know the sun will rise to-morrow, or for building up a science on the basis of assumed uniformity in nature. We have

no warrant that, at any moment, we may not be put to confusion in our calculations as scientists, if caprice, or unreason, or diabolic unrighteousness and lying and unfaithfulness, be at the root of all existence.

The scientist, though he may be agnostic as regards theology, takes the leap of faith as regards the mundane system. He builds up a science on the assumption that reason underlies this natural world, and the useful practical results for human life which flow from this assumption serve to verify and justify it.

The moralist and theologian just goes a step further than the natural scientist in assuming that the thought or reason underlying this mundane system, of which we as moral and responsible beings find ourselves to be a part, is moral reason or holy will, so that those who base upon this assumption and build their practical conduct upon it will not be put to confusion. And, in the one case not less than the other, the practical result for human life justifies the assumption, and the conclusions drawn from it, and the expectations based on it.

Our knowledge of holy, righteous will, as underlying and manifested in the uni-

verse, is thus knowledge of a similar kind to the scientist's knowledge of the uniformity of rational order or law in nature.

It is in both cases an assumption of faith, but a reasonable assumption which receives verification and justification in experience.

The impossibility of maintaining a consistent agnostic attitude towards ultimate reality while affirming true knowledge of anything at all, is seen in the case of Herbert Spencer, who, while he declares that God is unknowable, contradicts in large measure his own statement by postulating behind all phenomena an infinite and eternal power or cause of which man and the world are products. He tells us, further, that the likeliest thing to this power is that which we know as will.<sup>1</sup>

But in attributing to the so-called unknown or unknowable power beyond phenomena, efficient causality, infinity, eternity, omnipresence, and a likeness to the power of will in man, Spencer has already brought the unknowable to a considerable extent within the sphere of the known.

His difference from the Christian theist

<sup>1</sup> "First Principles," pp. 99, 189. Cf. "Ecclesiastical Institutions," pp. 839, 841, 843.

thus becomes mainly one of the degree or extent of the knowledge we can have of the supreme reality. The theist agrees with the agnostic in admitting that our knowledge of God is but limited, and imperfect and inadequate to grasp His infiniteness or to place us at His central standpoint for knowing reality.

The Christian theist, however, maintains that the partial knowledge of God we get from nature, of which He is the Maker and Upholder, from man and his history, over which He is sovereign Ruler, and above all from Jesus Christ, the perfect man, of whom He is the Father and in whom His moral character and purpose are most clearly revealed, is true and valid knowledge of God, which, though imperfect and incomplete, is sufficient for practical guidance in life.

If by "agnostic" it be meant that we cannot, "by searching, find out God or know the Almighty unto perfection," then, Christian theologians and men of science are alike "agnostic" to the extent to which it is realised that we, as finite spirits, cannot place ourselves at the central standpoint of the Infinite mind, or know all reality as it is known to God, or know God as He knows



Himself. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."<sup>1</sup>

But if by "agnostic" it be meant that we cannot have any true, reliable knowledge of ultimate reality, then the votary of physical science is no more an "agnostic" than is the Christian moralist and theologian. For the scientist starts from the unproved assumption of the uniformity of nature, *i.e.* that behind the apparent chaos and arbitrariness of the phenomenal world there is consistent reason or order which, by patient observation and induction, he with his rational mind can find out and know and make intelligible to other finite minds. On this assumption he builds up with confidence his useful sciences, which enable him to forecast the future and to shape his conduct accordingly. The idea of the uniformity of nature is only a probable assumption to begin with; but probability is the guide of life, and it becomes transformed from a probable assumption into reasonable knowledge of reality of a reliable kind as it is progressively verified and found to work in practical experience.

Similarly, the moralist and theologian

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 9.



builds on the assumption that the reason at the back of things is moral reason or Holy Love, *i.e.* God. It is only a probable assumption to begin with, but it becomes transformed into reasonable and reliable knowledge of reality as it is progressively verified and found to work in the moral and spiritual experience of practical life in this world.

The angle from which we, as finite minds, perceive and know ultimate reality in our moral and religious experience may not be the same as that from which God perceives and knows it. But the same is true of our knowledge of the physical world. In both cases the knowledge got, though it may be imperfect and incomplete, is yet true and reliable knowledge of reality, valid for us and suited for our practical guidance in life.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For the argument here made use of in dealing with agnosticism, *cf.* Professor Campbell Fraser's "Philosophy of Theism," First Series, Lecture VII.

ON GOD'S RELATION TO THE  
UNIVERSE



## II

### ON GOD'S RELATION TO THE UNIVERSE

"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."—*Apostles' Creed*.

"By faith we understand that the worlds have been framed by the Word of God, so that what is seen hath not been made out of things that do appear."—*Heb. xi. 3*.

THE Christian conception of God's relation to the universe, or the world of things and persons developing in history, includes three essential elements, viz. :

(1) That the world of finite things and persons in space and time has a real existence and a real history for God, as object of His thought and care, and is not to be regarded either as immediately identical with God or as a necessary emanation from His substance.

(2) That the world of finite things and persons has its cause or ground of existence in the will of God, and is thus entirely dependent on Him.

(3) That the world of finite things and persons is adaptable to God's purpose or under His supreme control, so that He can use it as His instrument towards the accomplishment of His supreme world-purpose, viz. the establishment of His kingdom.

I. The view that the world has a real existence for God and is not immediately identical with Him or a necessary emanation from His person, is in contrast with the pantheistic view which regards finite things and persons as but modes of the divine existence.

The pantheistic view leaves no room for the freedom or responsibility of finite human beings, and so saps the foundations of the moral life and comes into conflict with the deliverances of our moral consciousness.

Whatever may be said or thought as to the real existence of finite material things, we know that, as finite spirits or wills, we ourselves, at least, are true causes of our own volitions, and so have a real existence for God the Infinite Spirit distinct from His, however dependent we may be on Him. While we may say and feel that "in God we live, and move, and have our being," this cannot mean that we are immediately

identical with God or mere modes of His essential being or necessary emanations from Him. For that would mean the negation of all moral distinctions, and the denial of individual personality and responsibility as belonging to finite human beings. The ultimate deliverances of our rational self-consciousness, and still more of our moral consciousness, vouch for our existence as individuals over against God the Supreme Spirit in relative independence, as well as "in Him" as source and sustainer of all life.

As regards the real existence of material things, or the material world, the Christian view does not require us to come to any dogmatic decision on the philosophical issue between the Realist and Idealist schools.

The philosophical doctrine known as Realism maintains that matter has a real substantial existence given to it by God in the act of creation, and differs essentially from spirit. This doctrine, which is in harmony with the ordinary popular consciousness, is not incompatible with Christian Theism, so long as it is maintained that God the Creator, as Personal Spirit, has complete control over matter and its laws and forces, and can adapt these to



the accomplishment of His moral world-purpose.

On the other hand, the philosophical doctrine known as Idealism contends for an ultimate spiritual root or basis of matter which forms, as it were, the elements of the language in which God expresses Himself to finite spirits made in His own image. This, too, is not incompatible with Christian Theism so long as it is made clear, (1) that in relation to us finite spirits or minds matter has such objective reality or "outsideness" as enables it to oppose a limit to our consciousness of "self-hood," and serve as a means of our education or development; and (2) that in relation to God, the Supreme Spirit, there is conserved for matter such relative reality or distinctness as prevents the pantheistic identification of the material world with God to the imperilling of His free personality and the obliteration of all difference, as well as of all moral distinctions from the universe.

This idealistic or spiritualistic view of matter as being at bottom but the elements or letters of a divine language, by means of which God, the Supreme Spirit, utters His thought and expresses His mind and will to

finite spirits made in His likeness, may seem strange and foreign, if not absurd, to the ordinary popular or scientific consciousness. It receives a measure of support, however, in such utterances of the religious consciousness as we find in the Hebrew Psalms—*e.g.* Ps. xix. 1, 2 (R.V.).: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge.”

It is a view which has been widely held and expressed by poets and philosophers since the good Bishop Berkeley's day, and it has adherents among many of the most competent philosophical thinkers of our time. It fits in well with Christian Theism if only care be taken to avoid the errors of pantheism by claiming a true reality and causal activity for finite spirits, and by avoiding the mistake of confusing God with nature or shutting Him up within it and its laws, thereby denying to Him freedom and transcendence as well as immanence in relation to the material universe.

II. The second essential element in the Christian conception of God's relation to the world, viz. that the world of finite

things and persons has its cause or ground of existence in God's will, and so is entirely dependent on Him, is in contrast with all forms of dualism.

Dualism asserts the eternal existence over against God either of a kind of world-stuff or matter which He found, so to speak, to His hand, and worked up, like a great architect, into an ordered world as far as possible expressive of His thought; or else of an eternal personal spirit or devil thwarting God's purpose and hindering the realisation of His will.

The former is the kind of dualism we find underlying the thought of the Greek philosophers and poets, by whom matter is thought of as self-existent and eternal over against God or the gods. Behind both gods and men in Greek thought there is the dark shadow of blind fate or necessity, to which gods and men are alike subject.

The latter is the kind of dualism underlying the Persian or Manichæan philosophy, by which St. Augustine was for a time held enthralled.

In contrast to these views Christian Theism affirms that matter, whatever it be, and all finite spirits, whether human

or supra-human, owe their origin, being, and maintenance to the will of God, the one Supreme Cause.

This is what is meant by the Christian doctrine of the creation of all things out of nothing (*ex nihilo*). It does not mean us to think of the term "nothing" as denoting a kind of "world-stuff" or substrate used up as building-material in the making of the world. This would contradict the maxim *Ex nihilo nihil fit*. We should rather say that "God did not create the world out of something"—the *fact* of creation, as well as the *content* of the world created, has its foundation in God Himself alone. The causal activity of God as absolute creative will is what is signified by the expression.

The difficult philosophical question as to whether we can rationally conceive of the world as having had a beginning in time, or whether we can conceive of time itself as having had a beginning, has been answered in different ways by different philosophers and theologians from Origen downwards. Our ability or inability rationally to conceive of the relation to time of the eternal being of God, Who is exalted above time and space and not subject to the

limitations imposed by these on finite things and persons, does not really affect the vital element in the Christian conception of God's relation to the world. That vital element is that these all depend on the will of God for their origin, being and maintenance.

When we start thinking from the temporally-existing, historically-developing world we can only represent to ourselves its entire causal dependence on God under the mental image of a beginning in time. But the attempt to think this out is apt to lead us to imagine God as a Being existing *in time*, prior to the beginning of the world. That, however, is to subject the eternal God to the form of time, and to confine Him within the limits of a temporally conditioned mode of existence.

The conception of a beginning of the world in time would seem to imply the adding of something to the being of God at a point in time, which would imply a denial of God's eternal self-containedness and self-equality. Further, the world created in time over against God would seem to impose a limit on His infinitude. It would seem that we cannot construe to ourselves, in an adequate or intelligible way, the mode



of God's eternal supra-temporal existence, or conceive how the Eternal One enters into time in the process of creation. This is because our power of thinking, or at least of imagining, existing reality is conditioned by the form of time, under which alone we can picture or imagine real being as existing. The category of causality may indeed be sufficient to enable us to rise in a valid way from the world in space and time, viewed as an effect, to a transcendental supreme cause above the limitations of space and time, viz. the eternal personal God. But our customary application of this conception of cause and effect within the phenomenal world is bound up with the spatial and temporal conditions under which we know things in the phenomenal world as existing and related to one another. And so, when we come to apply this category of cause and effect to grasp God's relation to the world, we find ourselves instinctively making use, in our conceptions, of spatial and temporal conditions, so that the eternal cause is projected by us to a time prior and a space exterior to the temporally conditioned effect. This lands us in inevitable confusions and contradictions, which crop up at various points in the effort at theo-



logical construction. We cannot, it would seem, view things *sub specie æternitatis*. We cannot place ourselves at God's standpoint so as to understand in a rational way His relation to the world and time. This is because we are but finite human minds, and not the Infinite Divine Mind.

"By faith" it is that "we understand that the worlds have been framed by the word of God,"<sup>1</sup> though we cannot place ourselves at the divine standpoint so as to conceive rationally how it came to pass, or to elucidate clearly and adequately the relation of the Eternal God to the temporally developing world.<sup>2</sup>

To those who adopt the idealist view of the ultimate nature of matter the question as to a beginning of the world in time assumes a somewhat different aspect. It is then a question of when and how finite spirits first began to be in distinction from God, the one Supreme Spirit.

According to the philosopher Lotze the creation of the world may be conceived of after this manner.

<sup>1</sup> Heb. xi. 3.

<sup>2</sup> On the question as to a beginning of the world in time and the relation of the Eternal God to time, see further, Note C in Appendix.

“God permitted the thought which at first was only His own to become the thought of other spirits ; or He caused the world of finite spirits to arise in which His continual influence and operation causes His own cosmic thoughts to arise and figure as the appearance of an outer world surrounding them and capable of being perceived by them.”<sup>1</sup>

In harmony with this conception the devout scientist, when he discovers something new in nature, exclaims, “O God, I think Thy thoughts after Thee.”

III. The third essential element in the Christian view of the world of finite things and persons as made by God is that of the adaptability of the finite world and all its forces to God’s moral purpose in the world, viz. the realisation of His Kingdom.

It is this which lies at the root of Christian optimism, which finds expression in such utterances as that of St. Paul when he exclaims, “All things work together for good to them that love God” (Rom. viii. 28).

Pessimism, in all its varied forms, raises a doubt as to whether the moral purpose of a God Whose nature is supposed to

<sup>1</sup> Lotze, “Philosophy of Religion” (Engl. Tr.), p. 92.

be love is being fulfilled or can ever be fulfilled in such a world as that we live in, where—

Nature, red in tooth and claw,  
With ravine cries against the creed.

Pessimism asserts a contradiction between man's actual existence in this temporal world, subject to its seemingly blind forces, the sport of its mischances, and his true goal of self-realisation and happiness. It doubts the power of God to adapt the forces of the world so as ultimately to lead up to this goal.

It is usually associated with dualism in one form or another, which involves a denial of the entire dependence of the material world on God, and hence of its adaptability to His moral purpose to make the children of men whom He has formed in His own image truly good and happy in His Kingdom.

The Christian view, on the other hand, affirms confidently the adaptability of the world and its forces, as God's creature and instrument, to the accomplishment of His moral world-purpose, which is the perfecting of mankind in the Kingdom of God.

It is affirmed by the Christian Theist that the laying of the foundation and the fixing of the goal of the life of the world are grounded in the same highest will.

The existence and mode of being of the world and its forces, and of men with their aspirations, goes back to the one divine causality.

Even the freedom of will wherewith finite spirits have been endowed as the necessary precondition of moral development and true sonship to God, though it has brought about the influx of sin into the world, with all its attendant suffering and misery, cannot and will not be allowed finally to thwart or hinder the fulfilment of God's moral world-purpose.

The Christian or Theistic conception of God's relation to the world, as ultimate cause thereof, is not necessarily antagonistic to the evolutionary theory of the world's emergence if that be taken simply as a probable account of the historic process whereby our present planetary system has been evolved out of a nebulous mass of glowing matter in rotary motion.

For, as a theory of historic process merely, the evolutionary theory does not

touch upon the problem of origin or of the ultimate causal power at work in and guiding the process.

Evolution presupposes, to begin with, a given reality, simple in form, but capable of higher and more complex formation as time goes on. This can, without injury to the idea of development, be carried back to divine creative activity and purposeful appointment; and with evolution thus conceived of, Christian theology has no quarrel. It is a question simply of fact, a question of natural history as to the process in time whereby the world has come to be what it now is.

No knowledge we may get, or hypothesis we may form, as to the stages of an historic process settles the question of ultimate origin, or of the nature of the cause at work in the process and determining it throughout. Theology can leave natural science quite free to draw its own conclusions or form its own conjectures as to historic process, so long as it realises that it is not giving any real explanation of origin or accounting for the process by merely describing its stages. It is only when evolution is conceived of, in a mechanical, materialistic way, as entirely fortuitous in its beginning

and course, unconnected with any rational plan or purposeful aim or divine activity manifested therein, that it comes into conflict with the Christian view of God and His relation to the world.

When so conceived, evolution is hopelessly self-contradictory and helplessly unable to give any intelligible explanation, either of how the first stage in the evolution came to be or of what has guided the process.

How order and symmetry and beauty and utility, such as we now perceive in the world of nature, have come to be out of chaos through the fortuitous clashing and collocation of blind atoms, whether these be regarded as indivisible particles of inorganic matter or as units of electric force, is altogether inexplicable.

Evolution, conceived of as a mere process of becoming, requires us to postulate a cause behind it, and that cause an intelligent will, not less than does the older theory of immediate creation put forward to account for the beginning of all new forms of being.

The Christian view of God's relation to the world implied in the doctrine of creation, of which the essential elements have



just been expounded, is of the greatest importance for the practical Christian life. It lies at the root of intelligent Christian worship, with its holy reverence, praise and prayer, and it furnishes a basis for Christian optimism, with its confident trust and triumphant hope.

Religious worship has its root in the feeling of absolute dependence on a Being other than self, which is an essential element in the religious consciousness. And this feeling of absolute dependence has its rational basis in the truth which is expressed in the Christian doctrine of creation.

The feeling of absolute dependence on our part implies, as the other side of the relation, the absolute sovereignty of God as Maker of heaven and earth.

The first element in Christian worship—holy fear or reverence—springs from the consciousness that we are in the presence of a Being Who has absolute power over us, “in Whose hand are our lives, and Whose are all our ways.”

This attitude of holy fear or reverence is frequently alluded to in Scripture as the proper attitude of worshippers, as, for example, in Ps. ii. 11: “Serve the Lord

with fear, and rejoice with trembling." So, too, praise, which is a characteristic feature of Christian worship, springs from the consciousness that the mighty Power to Whom we owe our being and maintenance is a good and benevolent Power Whose end or purpose in creation is the welfare and happiness of mankind gathered into a perfect Kingdom under a perfect King. And this is included or implied in the Christian doctrine of creation.

Hence, in the Hebrew Psalms, the world's great praise-book, we find frequent reference made to the work of creation as the foundation of praise, as for example in Ps. cxlviii., where all creatures, celestial and terrestrial, rational and non-rational, are called upon to praise the Lord of heaven for His works of creation and providence.<sup>1</sup> So also in the Book of Revelation we find, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Let them praise the name of the Lord:

For He commanded, and they were created.

He hath also stablished them for ever and ever:

He hath made a decree which shall not pass away."

(Ps. cxlviii. 5, 6.)

<sup>2</sup> Rev. iv. 11.

So, too, Christian prayer has its basis and justification in the Christian doctrine of creation and providence. Of course other elements besides this doctrine enter into the question as to the justification of prayer. We might not have felt justified in approaching God in prayer simply from the consideration that He, as Creator, is All-powerful, and, as Preserver, still works in the world, had we not been expressly encouraged to do so by His will revealed to us in His word.

Yet having this scriptural encouragement to pray, it is our consciousness of God's absolute power as Creator, still exercised in providence, which enables us to do so with intelligence and reasonable hope of an answer.

This truth is beautifully brought out in the second paraphrase, in which God is invoked as Creator and Preserver, on Whom we depend for our being and well-being to continue His favour to the children of those who have trusted in and been blessed by Him in the past.

Only such a doctrine as the Christian doctrine of creation, which postulates a free, personal, and absolutely sovereign God on Whom we and all other creatures are

dependent, can afford a satisfactory basis for true religious worship. Where God's personality is thrown into doubt, as in the various forms of pantheism; or where His infinite power and absolute sovereignty are rendered dubious, as in dualistic theories, the springs of true worship are undermined. If God, in the works of creation and providence, be conceived of pantheistically as subject to necessity, He has done nothing to call forth the love or gratitude of intelligent creatures, and we cannot therefore praise Him. The spirit of worship tends to disappear under pantheism, as in India, where the worshipful attitude among the common people is only artificially maintained by the introduction of polytheistic, idolatrous elements foreign to and inconsistent with the general philosophical system.

In Greece, where dualism prevailed as a philosophy, the gods believed in by the people were personal, but their power was conceived of as limited, for behind both gods and men was stern fate, to which gods and men alike were subject. Man's confidence in God and assurance of salvation through Him cannot be unlimited if God Himself be in some measure dependent

on some material without Himself. Hence we find that the Greeks were only half in earnest about their religious worship. The fear of the gods was small among them, and decreased with the nation's progress.

And while the Christian doctrine of creation lies at the root of true Christian worship, it also furnishes the basis for the Christian's optimism.

It is only where Christian faith in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth" is present, that there can be a true optimism of spirit, with its confident trust and joyous and unquenchable hope.

Pantheism and dualism alike fail miserably to furnish a basis for optimism. The "Grand Être" Humanity which Comte and his positivist followers seek to worship and adore and trust in, is a feeble and foolish substitute for the Christian "Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth," Who alone is able to mediate between humanity, with its aspirations and ideals, and the forces of nature, seeing He is the Creator and Sustainer of both.

This truth, that optimism is grounded in God's creative work,—implying His ab-



solute power and His purpose of good towards us men—is abundantly recognised in Scripture, as, for example, in Ps. cxxi. :

I to the hills will lift mine eyes,  
From whence doth come mine aid ;  
My safety cometh from the Lord,  
Who heaven and earth hath made.

With this may be compared Ps. cxxiv. 8, Isa. xl. 28, and Isa. xlii. 5 *ff.*, where we have God's power in the work of creation emphasised as the pledge of His Kingdom's final triumph. Similar references to creation as pledge of the triumph of God's Kingdom are met with in the Book of Revelation (*e.g.* x. 6, iv. 11).

If, then, we are to have a sound intellectual basis for a life of reverent worship, trust and hope, we must, in face of all modern materialism and pantheism and agnosticism, hold firmly and intelligently to the reasonable Christian faith in "God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

The proof of the truth of this Christian view of the relation of God to the universe is found ultimately in the fact that it forms an essential part of the content of the Christian revelation—that Gospel, or "good news," which has proved itself to



be the "power of God unto salvation" to increasing multitudes of believing Christians all down through the ages. If the scientific assumption of the uniformity of nature—which is at bottom a Theistic assumption—is regarded as having been sufficiently established as true through the experience of many generations of scientific inquirers who have found that it was verified in their experience, furnished the basis of scientific inferences and expectations which were practically realised, and afforded guidance for practical conduct, not less may be said of the Theistic assumptions underlying the Christian Gospel. This Gospel, with all that belongs to its essential content, comes to us through the ages attested as true by the accumulated experiences of increasing millions of believers who have found in it the secret of victory over the world, with its sin and sorrow and death. The assumption of the truth of this Gospel, made in Christian belief, is an assumption which has, as matter of fact, been found to work in practice, and to bring redemption and peace and victory to those who guide their lives by it.

And it is by our own personal experience

of its power to bring healing and peace and victory into our own lives, as we yield ourselves to it and live under its power, that we become most firmly assured of its truth by the inward testimony of the Spirit of God in us. More and more, as we yield to and obey this Gospel message, does our obedience become to us the organ of spiritual vision and the means of confirmation in Christian faith and practice.



MAN'S NATURE AND ORIGINAL  
CONDITION



### III

## MAN'S NATURE AND ORIGINAL CONDITION

“ And God said, Let us make man in our own image and after our likeness.”—*Gen.* i. 26.

THE Christian conception of man is that of a complex or composite being consisting of body and soul or spirit. In virtue of his body, with its animal life, man is linked with the natural world and its chain of physical causation. In virtue of his soul or spirit he belongs to a supernatural or spiritual world along with God, in Whose image he is made, and Whose loving and obedient child he is meant to be in the fellowship of a perfect kingdom in life eternal. Such, in brief, is the essential content of the conception of man's nature based on the revelation culminating in Christ of which Holy Scripture is the record.

The individual soul or self, the “ ego ” or subject of human self-conscious experience, is



mysteriously associated with a particular living material organism, so that its thoughts and feelings are accompanied by movements in the brain-particles of this bodily organism. By means of this connection with a bodily organism, in contact with other distinct bodies, the individual soul comes to acquire a knowledge of its own body and of other bodies external thereto in a world of things in space and time.

But the relation between the thinking soul and its material body, though close and intimate, is mysterious and obscure, so that we cannot with confidence speculate about it. We cannot, in particular, affirm that the connection is so close that if our present living material body should be dissolved in death the soul associated with it must thereupon disappear or cease to be.

Regarding various problems of origins which imply questions of an historical, scientific, or philosophical kind—such as the question as to the origin of man on this earth, whether it was due to evolution from an ape-like ancestor or to an immediate act of creation, and the question as to the origin of individual human souls, whether by transmission from parents or

by direct creation—there is room for difference of opinion among those who adhere to the essentials of the Christian faith.

I. In virtue of his body man belongs to the natural world of creatures under physical law, of which he is the head or crown.

Scripture, in its view of creation, places man at the end of the process and at the head of creation.

In the original picture in Genesis we have a gradually ascending series of creatures, with man at the top of the scale as the creature in whom the process of creation in the natural world reaches a climax. And the whole of mankind is traced back to a single pair of ancestors.

On both these points modern biological science lends confirmation to the scriptural view. It declares man to be the last and highest and final product of physical evolutionary development. Whatever future development there may be will not be development beyond humanity as physical organism, but rather development within humanity. The end of the physical evolutionary process leads up to man, and the moral kingdom to be realised through him.

Science also tends to confirm the teaching

of the Bible as to the unity of the human race. Time was when scientists were wont to speak of separate "centres of creation," but that idea is now for the most part discarded in favour of the view that all men are descended from a single pair.<sup>1</sup>

II. But man, according to the Christian conception, is raised above all other creatures of the natural world, inasmuch as he is a being made in God's image, endowed with powers of self-conscious thought and free self-determination, which raise him above nature and its system of physical causation into the spiritual realm as a person capable of personal fellowship with God, the supreme, all-creating, all-sustaining, personal Spirit.

The image of God in man is to be found, not in his bodily form, but in those features which characterise him as personal spirit, viz. :

(a) Power of self-conscious rational thought :

(b) Power of self-determination or will ;

(c) Moral faculty or conscience ;

(d) Original goodness or conformity of natural powers to the divine will.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Orr, "God's Image in Man," pp. 41, 154 ; Fiske, "Through Nature to God," p. 85.

It is in virtue of this his spiritual nature, as a *person* made in God's image, that man is a morally responsible agent, exercises dominion over the lower creatures, and has aspirations after the infinite, which point to his high destiny as no mere passing creature of a day, but a being meant for immortality.

This Christian view of man's composite nature and lofty destiny is in direct opposition to the materialistic view, which denies man's dual nature and seeks to explain the soul or mind and the phenomena of the mental or spiritual life in terms of matter.

The strongest argument for materialism is no doubt the close and intimate connection which is found to subsist between the brain, with its movements, and the phenomena of the mental life in man, creating a presumption that, when the brain becomes dissolved in death, the mental life or "soul" associated with it will cease to be.

It is undoubtedly true that in our present state there is a constant and intimate connection between the phenomena of our conscious mental life and the movements of the particles of the bodily organ, called

the brain. This appears clearly in the fact that injuries done to the brain interfere with the successful exercise of our mental functions, or the mind's mastery over itself. Under the present conditions of our life it would seem to be impossible for the mind or individual self to feel or think or will or exercise any of the functions of self-conscious life apart from a physical organism including a brain.

But however intimate this mysterious connection between mind and brain may be in our present state, we cannot explain the mental phenomena out of the physical phenomena by help of the principle of causality.

Still less is our knowledge of the relationship between mind and brain so clear or adequate as to warrant the materialistic assertion that the individual mind cannot survive the dissolution of the brain with which it has been associated throughout life in this world.

III. The cruder form of materialism affirms that the mental phenomena—thoughts, feelings, and volitions—are related to the physical phenomena—the movements of the brain-particles—as effect to cause. This means that thoughts and feelings



and volitions are merely subtler forms of the same mechanical energy as is manifested in the movements of brain-particles. Just as the movements of material particles, which we perceive in the simplest form as matter in motion, may, as is now known, pass over into the phenomena we call sound or heat or light or electricity, so it is supposed they may, conceivably, under certain circumstances connected with brain-action, pass over into those mental phenomena of feeling, thought, and volition which are the characteristics of self-conscious mental life.

This offered explanation of the origin and nature of the phenomena of self-conscious life breaks down especially at three points :

(1) It is inconsistent with what science teaches as to the conservation of energy and the necessary disappearance of energy, in one form to account for the appearance of an equivalent amount of energy under another form.

According to the principle of the conservation of energy, the amount of mechanical energy in the universe remains always the same, so that when a new form of mechanical energy appears—such as light—we know that an exactly equivalent amount



of mechanical energy which pre-existed in another form—say as gas—has ceased to be in that old form and passed over into this new form. This is essentially what causation means in the material world.

If this is so, then, in the case of thoughts, feelings, and volitions, if these are physically caused, we should be able to point to the mechanical energy which has ceased to be in its previous form and passed over into this new form, even as we can point to the amount of *gas* which has passed over into *light*.

But this cannot be done. There has been no withdrawal of any portion of mechanical energy from the material world, such that we can point to it and say, “That is what has become transformed into thoughts and feelings and volitions.”

The mechanical energy which we see in operation in the material world can only push or pull, produce motion, or maintain statical equilibrium. Had we keen enough senses we could track the energy which produces movements in the matter of the brain through every one of its changes, and see its result in some physical effect produced. Every particle of physical energy present at the beginning, when some

stimulus communicated to the brain sets its particles in motion, is accounted for in the physical state of the brain at the end. None of this energy has disappeared from the physical realm so that we can say it has passed over into the spiritual realm and become feeling or thought.

The sum total of mechanical energy in the physical world remains the same, notwithstanding all the feelings and thoughts and complex phenomena of self-conscious life that arise and give content to human history.

“The mechanical cause,” says Du Bois Raymond, “extends itself entirely to mechanical operations. Thus, the intellectual occurrences which accompany the material occurrences in the brain are without an adequate cause as contemplated by our understanding. They stand outside the law of causality, and therefore are as incomprehensible as a *mobile perpetuum* would be.”<sup>1</sup>

(2) It is impossible to think of the phenomena of consciousness as having a causal basis in the molecular movements of the brain, or to establish any intelligible relation

<sup>1</sup> “Ueber die Grenzen des Naturerkennens,” p. 28. Quoted by Orr, “Christian View of God and the World,” p. 173.

between two sets of phenomena so entirely disparate in character and contrasted in the laws of their succession. "The passage from the physics of the brain to the corresponding facts of consciousness," says Professor Tyndall, "is unthinkable."<sup>1</sup> "The two things are on two utterly different platforms," says Professor Clifford, "the physical facts go along by themselves and the mental facts go along by themselves."<sup>2</sup>

Materialism maintains that, however dissimilar and incomparable mental and material phenomena may be, the order of mental phenomena arising in consciousness is identical with an order of physical phenomena or brain changes which is determined by purely mechanical conditions. But such supposed identity of order, and dependence of the order of the mental phenomena upon that of the physical or brain changes, cannot be made good. The two sets of facts go along by themselves, and their respective order is determined by different rules or principles. The one set of phenomena follows, according to

<sup>1</sup> "Fragments of Science," p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> "Body and Mind," in *Fortnightly Review*, 1874. Quoted by Orr, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

hypothesis, purely physical or mechanical laws, while the other proceeds in processes of thought according to laws of rational thinking or logical connection.

What possible "identity of order" can be imagined between two orders of phenomena so distinct and governed by such different rules or principles of connection?

(3) It is impossible further to reconcile the materialistic hypothesis with what is implied in self-consciousness, and with the consciousness of freedom or power of self-determination which each individual human soul possesses. Self-consciousness implies, not a mere stream or succession of separate impressions or feelings or sensations,—corresponding to a series of molecular changes in a piece of living brain-matter,—but a principle of unity or self or soul which apprehends these impressions and relates them to one another and to itself, a principle which not only remains one and the same throughout the changes, but is conscious of its self-identity through them.

If the mental changes—the successive feelings or sensations of conscious life—are not explicable out of the cerebral changes due to external stimuli and mechanical causation, still less can we explain in such

a way the consciousness of a persistent self amid these changes, bringing them all to a unity as sensations belonging to one self-conscious subject or soul.<sup>1</sup>

Nor can we reconcile the necessitarianism involved in the materialistic hypothesis with that sense of moral freedom and responsibility which is inalienable from our human consciousness, and furnishes the basis for the moral life.

IV. The cruder attempts of the older materialism to explain the phenomena of the self-conscious mental life out of the physical phenomena of cerebral changes, by means of the principle of causality, have given place in recent times to more subtle attempts to establish a theory of parallelism between the two sets of phenomena which go along each by itself.

According to this view, the two sets of disparate phenomena are but two sides or aspects of one reality, the living experience of a substance or monad which is neither mind nor matter, but an inscrutable something which manifests its life in the two sets of parallel phenomena. This conception, which is Spinoza's, does not serve to throw much light on the problem of

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Lotze, "Microcosmus" (Eng. Tr.), i. 152 ff.



our existence as individual beings. The indeterminate underlying substance, which is neither self-conscious mind nor extended matter, but the potential ground of both, is beyond the grasp of our rational cognition, and cannot be made the subject of any intelligible predicates.

Where the theory is held with a materialistic bias, as by Haeckel, the nature of the underlying single substance is conceived of as essentially material, and the series of material physical changes—the molecular movements of the brain-matter determined by mechanical laws of substance and force—is conceived of as primary and fundamental, the mental phenomena being accessory and dependent. There is little appreciable difference between this position and that of the cruder materialism. Where the theory is held with a more idealistic bias, as by Huxley or Spencer, we are left in a mist as to what becomes of the underlying individual substance when the one set of its phenomena—the cerebral changes—ceases to appear at the death of the body. The presumption is, however, that the substance then disappears.

A strict parallelism between the thoughts and feelings and volitions of the self-



conscious mind and the molecular changes of the brain cannot be maintained in any intelligible way, seeing that the two sets of phenomena are so dissimilar and incomparable and disparate in their determining principles. For the principle of logical consecution and rational connection of ideas, according to which the mental series is largely determined, has no essential connection with those laws of physical causation according to which the molecular changes of the brain-substance are determined.

Further, while we cannot conceive of the brain movements as being a cause of mental phenomena in any mechanical way, we can, on the other hand, conceive of volitions of the mind giving rise to molecular changes in the brain, and so producing results in the physical sphere. This points to a primacy of mind in the mysterious connection we find subsisting between mind and body in our present state, and so to the possibility of the mind or soul surviving the dissolution of the body.<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion we come to is that while in our present state there is an intimate

<sup>1</sup> For a thorough discussion of psychophysical parallelism, see Ward's "Naturalism and Agnosticism," Lectures xi.-xiii.

connection between mind and brain-matter, we cannot explain this connection. Still less can we legitimately say that the physical phenomena pass over into and become the mental phenomena, as heat passes over into and becomes light. What we must say is that the mental phenomena are due to the functioning and activity of a mysterious entity, or centre of life, which, for the present at least, is intimately bound up with this living animal organism. We cannot say, however, that the connection between the two is so close and constant that the soul or spirit could not continue to exist and function even if the body, which is its present organ of manifestation, were dissolved, or a different body substituted for it.<sup>1</sup>

V. It may, perhaps, be said that, as the lower animals show signs of intelligence, if a soul or mind is to be claimed for man, distinct from the body, a like claim must be made on behalf of the lower animals. If not, the existence of "souls" must be denied equally for both.

It is true that many of the lower animals

<sup>1</sup> For the line of argument adopted in the preceding pages, *cf.* Orr's "Christian View of God and the World," pp. 168-176.

give indications of a rudimentary kind of conscious mental life which raises them in the scale of being above plants and inorganic things. But it does not follow that the "animal soul," or principle of conscious life which functions in the lower animals is of the same worth, or intended for the same immortal destiny, as is the soul of man according to the Christian view.

Man, as a living soul, is so markedly distinguished from, and superior to, the lower animals that his emergence on this earth may fitly be regarded as the emergence through divine action of a new kind of living creature, for which a new kind of destiny may fitly be expected.

Man alone, we have reason to believe, is a self-conscious, rational being, capable of moral agency.

Man alone is conscious of a permanent self or "ego" underlying the changing states of his consciousness and enabling them to be bound together into a whole of self-conscious experience. He alone knows what it means to say "I." He alone possesses the power of rational thought, the faculty of rising above the particular and laying hold on the "uni-

versal " elements in things. He alone, it would seem, has the power of abstraction and generalisation, of rising from one truth to a higher truth, from one law to a wider law, and ultimately to the idea of the infinite, of the eternal, of God.

Man alone has *moral* faculty, freedom of will, and moral responsibility. In some of the higher animals we may see the preparatory elements or rudiments of a self-conscious mind, but the self-conscious, morally responsible individual mind or "self" is not present in any creature till man is reached. He alone is capable of religion.

Between such a self-conscious, rational, morally responsible, personal spirit, with aspirations after the infinite and eternal, and the dimly conscious sub-personal, non-moral mental life of the mere animal, driven by its instincts without moral choice, there is a difference so great that it may fitly be regarded as a difference of kind which marks an entirely new departure in creation, and which may point towards an altogether new kind of destiny for the creature that has thus come to be. The argument in favour of man's immortal destiny which carries most weight, is not

that which is based on mere ontological considerations as to the supposed characteristics of *mental* substances, as contrasted with *bodily* substances, which might conceivably apply to the mental principle or "soul" seen to be operative in the lower animals, not less than to that operative in man; but rather that based on ethical and teleological considerations in respect to which man and the lower animals are on entirely different levels.

VI. There has been much discussion over the theory of biological evolution put forward by Charles Darwin and others to explain the emergence of man as a species of animal on this earth, and its bearings on the Christian conception of man's nature and destiny.

Strictly speaking, the evolutionary hypothesis in regard to man's emergence on earth is a theory of *process* or *becoming*, belonging to the realm of natural history, and does not concern itself with the question of ultimate origin or causality.

Its essential feature, as applied to man, is that the first parents of the human race came into being on this earth by genetical descent from sub-human ape-like parents, whose other children are represented by



the gorilla, ourang-outang, and other apes now extant on earth.

This theory of biological evolution put forth to account for the origin of species, and of the species *homo* among others, may be propounded either from an anti-theistic or from a theistic view-point in regard to the causes at work in the process.

Its original propounder, Darwin, had the anti-theistic bias not uncommon among men of purely scientific training, and this gave to the theory an anti-theistic and anti-Christian complexion which did not necessarily belong to it. At the hands of some later advocates, however, the evolutionary theory of man's descent or ascent has been propounded from a theistic view-point in regard to underlying cause; and in this way the attempt has been made to harmonise evolution with the essentials of the Christian conception of man.

The general idea underlying the theory of biological evolution is briefly this :

(1) It is the nature of living creatures, by an immanent power of self-reproduction, to produce others just like themselves. This is known as the Law of Heredity, or Reproduction.



(2) Among the offspring thus produced there are found to be variations from the parental type of a more or less marked kind. This is known as the Law of Spontaneity, or Variation.

(3) Of the varieties thus appearing among the offspring, some prove better able to adjust themselves to their environment than those exactly like the parents or those varying in other directions. And so, in the struggle for existence continually going on among the animals of the world because of their tendency to multiply beyond the means of subsistence, those having the favourable variation, which enables them to adapt themselves better to environment, have an advantage over their fellows and tend to survive and to perpetuate their favourable variation. This is known as the Law of Natural Selection, or the Survival of the Fittest in the struggle for existence. The variation "selected," in this way, proves to be a first upward step in a process of evolution whereby ever higher and more adaptable forms of organised life are reached, through a repetition of the same process.

Now, if this be taken as a roughly accurate statement of observed facts in the

realm of natural history, it certainly helps to throw some light on the way in which some higher species of animal may, through the gradual accumulation of successive favourable variations, have emerged from a lower and less complex type of animal. But the question as to the "cause" at work in the process, or the "resident forces" by means of which the continuous progressive change in the manifestation of life is accomplished, still remains unanswered.

And it is in regard to this that theistic and non-theistic advocates of evolution differ.

The non-theistic evolutionist imagines he can conceive of the whole process going on in a blind mechanical way, without any power of intelligence or guiding will behind it.

The theist, on the other hand, says this wonderful process of biological evolution, which the science of natural history enables us to describe, is throughout a manifestation of power, and the power or "resident force" manifested therein is evidently that of a rational mind and purposeful will, which from the first knows and aims at the results reached in the course and end of the process.

This difference of view-point is of fundamental importance as regards the evolutionary theory.

It comes out at every point of the theory, when we inquire as to the cause of what takes place. Let us direct attention, for example, to the variations in offspring which play so important a part in the whole upward movement. Were it not for the appearance of these varieties in offspring, there would be nothing for the law of natural selection to work upon in bringing about the upward evolutionary movement. Therefore it is of crucial importance to know how and why the varieties that do emerge come to be. Darwin has no answer to give to this, except the evasive and unsatisfying answer, "by chance." The variations that appear in offspring under the "law of spontaneity" are very slight, and in all directions and without aim or purpose.

The searching test of adaptability to environment wipes out the majority of aimless fortuitous variations, and permits only the favourable to survive. Darwin lays stress on the slightness of the variations in order that his explanation of them, as due to nothing but chance, may appear plausible. But when the cumulative result

of a succession of such successful variations is seen to be the emergence of a new and higher species of animal, then the plausibility of attributing the variations to mere chance as their cause becomes less apparent, and we begin to feel the need of some more satisfactory cause. The variations that occur are not, as a matter of fact, in all directions, nor can they reasonably be attributed to blind chance as their cause. They must be conceived of as having their ground or cause in some capacity or power latent within the living, developing organism, and becoming manifest as this unfolds its potential life. On this view the unfolding of the rich manifoldness of living forms in the process of biological evolution would be no haphazard, aimless procedure, but rather the unfolding of a thought, purpose, and will, immanent in living organisms from the first, and put there by the mind of God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

The Christian theist, if he accepts the evolutionary theory as to the origin of species, sees the all-wise and all-loving God of Christian faith in and behind the evolutionary process all through, working out His wise and loving purposes, yet in a way

not contrary to nor apart from the so-called secondary causes at work in history.

Thus, to take the concrete case of man, if the scientific evolutionist contends that the first parents of the human race were the children or immediate uterine descendants of parents that were not men, but sub-human ape-like animals, the Christian theist may say, "That is possible; but if so, then the variation which appeared when the first man or the first human pair appeared among the progeny of non-rational animals was no trifling variation due to chance, but a leap upwards of a very striking kind. That variation—that upward leap in the evolutionary process—like all other variations of progeny, great or small, which have proved of importance in conditioning the upward evolutionary movement, is explicable only by presupposing that, at work in the process, there is an intelligent, purposeful, active will which knows the end from the beginning, and produces variations in connection with parental generation to suit His wise and loving purposes."<sup>1</sup>

Even with the admission that God is the

<sup>1</sup> On the idea of "gaps" in the evolutionary process, see Note D in Appendix.



cause of all variations in genetic reproduction, by virtue of His transcendent creative power, as well as the cause of the reproduction itself, by virtue of His immanent conservative power, there are some who feel repelled by the idea that the first parents of the human race were the genetic descendants of non-rational ape-like ancestors. They prefer to entertain the older idea that the first human pair appeared on this earth by the direct creative act of God, without any genetic connection with bestial ancestors. Nor, indeed, can it be said that the evolutionary view of the origin of species is as yet more than a probable scientific hypothesis.

The fact that within the historic period no new species of animals are known to have emerged in this way from pre-existing species, and that hybrids like the mule are found to be sterile, are difficulties in the way of accepting this view of the origin of species as scientifically established.

Still, it is a view that is regarded as highly probable by most competent biologists of our day, and it is well to realise that, as a mere history of process which does not profess to explain the ultimate cause of the process, it can be reconciled with a theistic



and Christian conception alike of God and of man.

VII. The question as to the origin or emergence of man on this earth is closely connected with another question, which is of importance for Christian faith, that, namely, as to the original or primitive mental and moral condition of man on earth.

The scriptural conception of man's primitive condition is that of a state of innocent uprightness which is neither to be regarded as a state of intellectual and moral perfection, nor yet as a state of such moral instability as made a fall into sin inevitable, but rather as a state of untried moral goodness which made it possible to advance to tried and ripened goodness by a right use of will-power, but which made it possible also to fall into sin through misuse of the gift of free-will.

Theologians of a past generation, starting from the Biblical idea of man as made in God's image, have shown a tendency to depict, in an exaggerated manner, the excellencies of man's original condition by way of bringing out more forcibly the ruin resulting from the fall into sin.

In a famous sermon on Gen. i. 27, Dr. South, speaking of man's primitive condi-

tion, says : " Discourse was then almost as quick as intuition ; it could sooner determine than now it can dispute. There is as much difference between the clear representations of the understanding then and the discoveries that it makes now as there is between the prospect of a casement and that of a keyhole. . . . We may guess at the stateliness of the building by the magnificence of the ruins. . . . An Aristotle was but the rubbish of an Adam and Athens but the rudiments of Paradise."

Such high-pitched notions of man's primitive condition cannot, however, be reconciled either with the picture given in Scripture, with the general conceptions of the moral life, or with the Christian conception of the worth and reality of history.

When we turn from such rhetorical descriptions of man's primitive condition to the Scripture picture of this condition, we are surprised by its moderation.

The first human pair, as there depicted, are neither prodigies of intellectual insight and knowledge, nor yet paragons of moral excellence, but simple, ignorant, innocent beings, who might have been obedient to known duty and so remained upright, but who succumbed to temptation and fell.

We cannot think of the qualities or excellencies of primitive man as ripe or tested qualities of moral character, since such can only come into being by means of free self-determination and through a process of probation.

Further, a primitive condition of ripe intellectual and moral perfection, standing at the beginning of human existence, would leave no essential or valuable content for history and no place for probation.

Evolutionary science, on the other hand, tends towards a representation of man's original condition which is at the opposite extreme from that just given.

Reason and conscience, on their primary emergence in the first progenitors of the human race, are supposed to have been so very faint and feeble that a yielding to the promptings of the lower nature—the animal passions and desires—as against reason and conscience was inevitable.

The fall into sin, on this view, would have to be regarded as a necessity of man's onward moral progress—as, in fact, part of God's supreme world-purpose—and a step upwards in human evolution from child-like innocence to moral knowledge of good and evil.

In contrast with this view, which conceives of a fall from primitive innocence to sin as inevitably necessary, and so in the end ascribes the responsibility for sin to God, Who is responsible for man's nature or constitution as a creature, the Christian conception of man's primitive condition is that of a state of innocence and uprightness, which, though as yet falling short of moral perfection, rendered the attainment of such possible, without any fall into sin, that being something abnormal and contrary to God's will in His universe. Of this more will fall to be said in the next lecture.



MAN AS SINFUL





## IV

### MAN AS SINFUL

“Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions.”—*Eccles.* vii. 29.

“Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.”—*Ps.* li. 5.

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”—*Rom.* iii. 23.

ACCORDING to the Christian conception, the actual condition of man in this world is not his normal or divinely intended condition. There are evidences of abnormality, evidences of a blight or “radical evil”—to use Kant’s phrase—that has penetrated through the race and changed its character. The primitive original condition of innocence and uprightness, befitting a creature made in God’s image, has somehow given place to an actual present condition of sinfulness which is now the condition of mankind generally.

The Christian conception of sin includes affirmations as to its nature and origin, as

to its prevalence and propagation, and as to its effects or consequences.

I. As regards its *nature* the Christian conception of sin is that of something which is, but which ought not to be, because it is contrary to the law of man's proper life and well-being as grounded in God's purpose.

The idea of a thing that ought not to be, which is the idea of moral evil, is one which we derive immediately and intuitively from the voice of conscience within us.

We have an intuitive sense of moral obligation resting on us, an apprehension of being under a moral law—what Kant calls the “categorical imperative”—of duty. We have an instinct or apprehension (of which we can give no further account, but that we find it to be part of our human constitution) that there is that which we ought to be and do, if we are to live aright, and whatever deviates from that we pronounce to be morally evil and blameworthy. As to how this sense of “oughtness”—this feeling of imperative moral obligation which belongs more or less pronouncedly to all men—arises, different opinions have been advanced.

On the Christian view, the only satisfactory explanation of it is found in the

fact of our dependence on God, a Being of infinite wisdom and love, Whose purpose and will grounds the moral law and prescribes the conditions of right living for us, which yet we may rebelliously transgress. In the light of this, sin is seen to be not merely a violation of the law of right living, but an offence against God. It is moral evil viewed as an offence against God, under Whose moral government we are.

God governs mere things or non-rational, non-moral agents by means of natural laws, to which they naturally and inevitably conform. But He governs the free and rational creatures He has made in His image by means of moral laws, which differ from natural laws in two respects; viz. (1) in that they involve the idea of duty or "obligation," so that under moral law the feeling that "we ought" arises; and (2) in that they are fulfilled, not inevitably, like natural laws, but through the intervention of free-will, which leaves open the possibility of disobedience.

As, according to the Christian revelation, God, on Whose will the moral law is grounded, is our Father, His will is no mere arbitrary or tyrannical command, but a loving, fatherly will, which seeks ever the highest

good of His children. Hence, sin, as a violation of God's will, is also a contradiction of man's own true good and destination, a violation of the law of man's own true self-realisation, well-being and happiness. It is the turning away of a being meant for sonship from that trust and obedience which he owes to a father, and in rendering which he can alone become a true son and realise the true end or aim of his own being.

The standard of true life for men, of which sin is a contradiction, is partially revealed to all men through the voice of conscience, which is the voice of God's Spirit within.

But along with this inward witness of the Spirit in conscience which is common to all men, Christians believe that they have a more objective and outward witness of the same Spirit in an historic divine revelation, of which Holy Scripture is the record, and Christ is the consummation. For Christian faith, the measure or standard of moral judgment is the revelation given in Jesus Christ, and sin is anything in thought, word, or deed, which contradicts that standard. Its fundamental forms are *godlessness*, or negation of the right relation and attitude to God, which will be found at the root of

all evil ; *sensuality*, or want of proper self-control ; and *self-seeking*, or an egoistic want of consideration and love for our neighbour.

The ethical aspect of sin as moral *badness*, abnormality, violation of the law of right human living, is found on careful analysis to lead up to the religious aspect of it as an *offence against God*, a running counter to the divine purpose, a perverse opposition to God's holy will. Both these aspects of it, which are verified in moral and religious experience, find a place in the Christian conception of sin.

II. As regards the *origin* of sin, some would seek to wave this aside as difficult to determine and of comparatively little importance.

“ Whatever may have been its origin,” it is said, “ we know that sin is here now, and that it is bad, and that it should be our aim and aspiration to get quit of it. Why trouble about its origin ? How can any knowledge we may gain of that affect our present estimate of sin as something bad which we should earnestly desire and seek to get rid of ? ”

This may seem plausible, but it does not really satisfy. The estimate we form



of sin, and of our blameworthiness on account of it, depends not a little on the view we take of its origin. In estimating the nature of sin we cannot really avoid coming to some judgment as to its origin, and the view we take of this influences materially our estimate of sin's character.

Now the Bible revelation, with which the voice of conscience within us agrees, leads us to attribute the origin of sin, not to the ordaining will of God, nor to any necessary ground in the constitution of nature or of man, but to the perverse use of free-will by man, who has thereby become the author of his own misery and undoing.

God has endowed the rational creatures He has made in His own image with the great but dangerous gift of *free-will*, which was necessary if they were to become moral agents, freely obedient children of the Heavenly Father.

But man has misused his gift of freedom to oppose himself to the will of God, so bringing sin into the world with all its woes.

This view of the origin of sin is in opposition to all views which make sin a necessity, an inevitable feature of human development, traceable ultimately to its root in

the ordaining will of the Supreme Power Who is over all.

Of such theories, the most popular at the present day in scientific circles is some form of what has been called the "sensuous theory," which is associated with views widely current as to man's evolutionary origin from an ape-like ancestor.

According to this view, primitive man, as he emerged from the brutal condition, was so heavily handicapped by the "remains of the brute" in him—appetites and desires and passions of a merely animal kind clamouring for immediate gratification—that his dawning reason and conscience had no chance to enforce their dictates against these, and a "fall" into sin was inevitable, and indeed a necessary first step in acquiring knowledge of good and evil and making moral progress upwards.

This hypothetical account of man's primitive condition as one of preponderating animalism, with reason and conscience so dim and rudimentary that they were powerless to direct the life, is associated with a naturalistic theory of evolution which ignores teleology, and holds it possible to explain the whole process of evolution

by the operation of the principle of natural selection on very slight variations in progeny occurring without aim or purpose.

Darwin himself undoubtedly had this conception of "evolution," as a theory that excluded or rendered superfluous all ideas of *teleology*, or purposeful directive agency guiding the evolutionary process. Such a theory of evolution would imply that the transition from the irresponsible brutal condition to the morally responsible condition of man was effected in a gradual way by successive slight variations, so that it would be very hard to say where the merely animal condition ended and the human began.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to fit the Bible conception of the fall of primitive man from a state of innocent uprightness into a state of sin by misuse of free-will, into such a theory of man's evolutionary origin. And so we find that by most who hold this view of man's origin, the "fall" is denied or explained away as symbolic of the upward step in evolution achieved by man when he emerged from the irreflective innocence of the brutal condition to the reflective knowledge of good and evil, and to the other forms of

moral experience which are characteristic of the human condition.

A "fall" into sin being thus regarded as inevitable in man's evolutionary progress, the blameworthiness of human sin is seriously undermined, and its evil character and dangerous consequences are minimised.

This whole conception of evolution, which ignores the indications of teleology in the process, and shuts out the idea of a wise, purposive intelligence at work in and behind every stage of the process, has been seriously and successfully challenged as utterly unsatisfactory and inadequate to account for the facts, not only by theologians like Professor Orr, but by the most competent scientists of Britain, Germany, and America.

The Darwinian theory, which explains evolution by very slight fortuitous and aimless variations, and "natural selection" working upon those, is not now regarded by many competent scientists as furnishing an adequate or satisfactory account of the origin of species. And if once *purpose* is admitted as underlying and directing the evolutionary process, it assumes an entirely new aspect. There is no longer need to suppose that the "variations" in

progeny which mark the upward movement should be very "slight," or that the new species of animal emerging by evolution should differ from its parents by just the slightest variation.

The variations in progeny are in no case due to blind chance, but to purposive intelligence at work in the whole process. Hence there may be "leaps" upward in bodily and mental organisation if the "purpose" of the power at work in evolution requires it. Such a "leap" upward, both in bodily and mental endowment, we may well believe took place when man first appeared on earth, descended though he may have been from some ape-like ancestor. For the primitive condition of a being endowed with reason—with power of self-conscious thought and self-determining will and sense of moral obligation—however elementary and undeveloped these may have been, differs widely from that of a non-rational brute, and constitutes him a new kind of creature altogether. The idea that sin in man is the inheritance of the brute-nature which he is leaving behind breaks down on closer scrutiny.

Take the case of a simple sensual sin such as gluttony or drunkenness.



The appetite for food or drink in a healthy animal is a good and natural thing, arising from some real want, such as hunger or thirst, and tending instinctively, by a kind of implicit reason, to *disappear* when the want is satisfied.

This instinct or implicit reason guides the brute to stop when the want is satisfied, and not to go to excesses in eating or drinking. Sin in man does not result from his following his natural appetites or desires in a natural way, as a mere animal might do, but in his allowing his appetites and desires to become *inordinate* and *excessive*, and going on gratifying them in face of reason and duty.

For while the mere animal is guided by *instinct*, and stops eating or drinking when his natural want is satisfied, man, by virtue of his power of self-conscious thought or reason, is able to set before himself alternatives between which he can choose. Over against the law of reason or duty, which tells him he ought to stop eating or drinking when his natural want is satisfied, he can place the *pleasure* experienced in eating or drinking or other gratification of appetite, as a motive to go on eating or drinking beyond the limit prescribed by reason or duty. He can thus produce an inordinate



or excessive appetite, which prompts him to go on eating or drinking for the sake of the pleasure of it, after the *real* want of nature has been satisfied. It is herein that the possibility of human sin in connection with the bodily appetites lies.

It is not the "remains of the brute" in man that is the essence of sin, but rather the first self-assertion of bad-will in a rational being—the preferring of pleasure or sensual gratification to known duty.

The brute cannot sin, because his natural appetites and passions are guided by the natural law of his being. Man can sin, because, being free and rational, having power to set ends before himself and to distinguish between *duty*, the true law of his being, and *pleasure*, which he can imagine to be experienced through transgressing what conscience tells him is the true law of his being, he can prefer *pleasure* to *duty*, and wilfully violate the true law of his being.

It is through the misuse of freedom and pursuit of imagined pleasure contrary to duty that the passions and appetites in man become abnormal or excessive, and lead him wrong.

Inordinate appetites and desires are thus

not "the remains of the brute in man"—to say which is to do injustice to the brute and the appetites and desires with which the Creator has made him—but rather abnormal developments found only in a rational being who has misused his freedom. All theories which represent sin as inevitable, and which put the responsibility for it ultimately on God, are in contradiction with the scriptural representations and with the deliverances of the healthy human conscience.<sup>1</sup>

Among those who, in accordance with Scripture and conscience, attribute the origin of sin to human free-will, there are some who lay exclusive stress on the misuse of free-will by the first parents of the human race as the responsible cause of all subsequent sin and evil.

Our first parents, it is supposed, by perverse misuse of the gift of free-will bestowed on them, violated the law of their true being, whereby human nature was corrupted in its fountain-head, and continuance in sin became the inevitable fate of their descendants.

The descendants of this fallen pair are held

<sup>1</sup> On theories which make sin a necessity, see further, Note E in Appendix.

to have inherited an entail of sin which deprives them of all freedom of will, and makes them the inevitable slaves of sin from birth, and heirs of all its woes.

Now, undoubtedly Scripture attaches the greatest importance for human life and destiny to the fall into sin of the first human pair, who began life in a state of innocent goodness or moral uprightness. The Biblical story of the fall, representing the transition from such a condition of primitive moral goodness to sin, is meant to be taken, not as a mere moral apologue, exhibiting how sin originates in human individuals generally, but as recording an historic event of the infancy of the human race, however clothed in symbolism or allegorised in form, which has had the most profound effect on its development and experience.

Such a "fall" from a state of innocence into sin through misuse of the power of free-will occurring far back in the infancy of the human race, is presupposed by the Biblical writers, both of the Old and New Testaments, in their treatment of human sin. But though the first fall into sin of beings morally innocent and upright could not but mark a crisis of the greatest moment

in human development, it seems an exaggeration of what is set forth in Scripture to say that the sin of our first parents has deprived their descendants of all freedom of will. That would be to do away with all real moral responsibility except in the first progenitors of the race, whose wills alone were free to begin with.

It is true that mental and moral qualities or dispositions seem in some measure to be transmissible from parent to child. It is true also that environment and example have great influence in shaping and moulding moral character.

But while fully allowing for these things, and while fully realising that the child of sinful parents, born into a community of sinners, breathing their atmosphere and influenced by their example, is in a situation unfavourable to the development of character and to good and holy living, we must yet maintain that every child of man as an individual responsible moral agent has such freedom of will at least as is necessary to make his life a probation, and to make him a morally responsible being having a share in the shaping of his own destiny.

No doubt the fact of *heredity* and the fact of *racial* sin, or the kingdom of sin

that has come to be set up in the world into which we are all born, affects us all from infancy, and gives us by nature a bias towards evil, which it requires the grace of God to counteract. But, on the other hand, the grace of God has been at work in the world all down the ages, and now conspicuously in Christ Jesus, counteracting the evil effects of heredity and racial sin, and making it possible for individuals to rise above these through yielding to the influences of divine grace.

It appears then, notwithstanding heredity and environment, that with the grace of God offered and available, life is still a probation for all men, and individual freedom has its place in determining issues.

III. With regard to the prevalence of sin, Scripture teaches us to think of it as universally spread throughout the human race. "There is none righteous," exclaims the Apostle, "no, not one; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."<sup>1</sup>

This affirmation of Scripture is verified and confirmed in our own case as individuals, by the judgment of conscience; in the case of our fellow-men whom we meet

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 23.



with in life's experiences, by observation ; and in the case of mankind generally, by the testimony of history and biography, the self-witness of men of any moral earnestness and insight belonging to all ages and peoples, the implications of all systems of religion, and the institutions and arrangements of civil society everywhere.

(1) If we look into our own hearts we find evidence that we all fall short of what our consciences tell us we ought to be. There has never lived any member of our race, save only Jesus Christ, who has given evidence of moral insight and sincerity and yet has claimed to be morally perfect, or to come up to the ethical standard of duty as known to him. Our consciences condemn us all more or less clearly and emphatically as sinners, who have "done the things we ought not to have done, and left undone the things we ought to have done."

(2) And what we know from conscience to be true of ourselves we know from observation to be true of all our fellow-men of whom we have knowledge. Even in the best and most admired of our race we observe defects and faults, while in many these are numerous and glaring.



(3) When, further, we study the history of our race in the past and read the biographies and testimonies of those who have lived before us, we become aware that what is true of ourselves and our neighbours is true of all men everywhere. All men are seen to come short of the standard of moral excellence set before them by conscience, and do at times flagrantly transgress it.

The testimony got from examining the various religions of the world is to the same effect; for sin or moral evil in one form or another is presupposed as adhering to men in all their religious systems, whose main function is to provide means of escape or deliverance from its pollution and burden.

The very institutions and arrangements of society point also to the prevailing evil of human nature—penal laws and institutions being found necessary everywhere for repressing the outbursts of passion and violence, and giving protection against the injustice of selfishness and fraud.

IV. The propagation of sin is attributable, according to Scripture teaching, partly to the transmission by heredity of dispositions and inclinations and impulses of an ab-

normal or inordinate kind which predispose those who have inherited them to sin; partly to the evil influence of surrounding environment—the temptations that come through the offences of others, the influence of bad example either provoking to retaliation or seducing the weak will.

The relations in which the race-connection involves men are so various, and many of them so close, that they constitute a factor in shaping the development of character of no small moment alongside the principle of heredity, which is now widely recognised as one at least of the factors contributing to the propagation of sin.

The question as to the transmission of moral as well as physical qualities from parent to child is involved in some obscurity; but it may be regarded as established that through physical inheritance an abnormal strength of particular appetites or impulses may be handed on, such as predisposes to particular sins. And this, taken along with the evil influences or temptations due to environment, has served to propagate sin throughout the human race, and make it into a dominion or kingdom of sin into connection with which all men are now born.

V. As regards the effects or consequences of sin, these may be described according to the view-point from which they are regarded as, (1) guilt and depravity, (2) estrangement from God, and, (3) punishment or penalty.

(1) From the moral or ethical point of view, sin issues in *guilt* and *depravity* or corruption of nature. The word *guilt* is used to denote both the ethical quality of blameworthiness or culpability (Latin, *culpa*) and the legal condition or state of liability to punishment (Latin, *reatus*). Guilt in the sense of moral blameworthiness belongs not only to the acts of the will or the product of such acts, but also to sins of omission, and to evil inclinations and dispositions of the heart from which evil acts proceed.

As individuals we are blameworthy, not only on account of our sinful acts, but also on account of sinful habits or dispositions, which, though they may be in part due to hereditary tendencies, do not become our own, or part of us as individual "egos" and rational moral agents, without some consent of the personal will. Our dispositions and inclinations or habits are ours because we have appropriated them by

our individual wills, and so we are blameworthy if these dispositions are evil.

The legal idea of liability to punishment or condemnation by lawful authority is a consequence of moral blameworthiness rather than an essential part of it, although the word "guilt" is freely used to cover both ideas.

When "guilt" is said to be *remitted* or *transferred* it is not the moral blameworthiness or culpability that is meant, for that cannot be removed. It is the liability to punishment under righteous moral government,—the legal aspect of guilt which is a consequence of the moral—which can alone be thought of as remissible or transferable.

Besides the fact of *guilt*, that of *depravity* or corruption of nature is another effect issuing from sin looked at from the moral point of view. The effect of sin, where the will has chosen pleasure or self-gratification in preference to duty, is to introduce disorder into man's soul, or to bring about a condition of character which is abnormal, depraved, or corrupt.

When it is said that this depravity is *total* or *entire* it is not meant that the man, whose nature is thus said to be depraved

is without any admirable qualities, or is as bad as bad can be. It means that the presence of sin or the absence of the right attitude and relation to God affects all parts of a man's being, not one part only, and renders even his most praiseworthy actions imperfect.

If the nature is not right at the root—if at the root of all there is a heart turned away from God and His will—then the fruits of that nature, even the most praiseworthy, will lack something they ought to have and so be imperfect.

(2) From the religious point of view the effect of sin is to separate or alienate man from God. In the case of the individual this estrangement shows itself in the absence of that sympathy, trust and love, which are the characteristic marks of the true religious life. In the case of society it appears in the whole system of relations and influences which owe their existence to selfish impulses, and which are designed to minister to their gratification. To the extent to which society is permeated by such principles it is estranged from God, and constitutes a rival kingdom, controlled by interests and seeking ends of its own.



(3) From the point of view of the divine government, sin issues in punishment or penalty, which is the outcome of the wrath and curse of God against sin. God's wrath is the settled antagonism of His holy nature towards wrong or evil manifesting itself alike in feeling and in action. God's curse upon sin is the divine sentence of condemnation pronouncing punishment upon transgressors. These together—the wrath and curse of God—are scriptural terms expressive of the punitive attitude of God in relation to sin and sinners—the revelation of His holy displeasure or disapproval, the manifestation of His righteous judgment.

All the evils that men suffer in consequence of sin are of the nature of punishment or penalty just in so far as in them God shows His wrath and inflicts His curse.

Any privation, suffering or loss, whether of body, mind or outward estate, appointed by God to express His holy hatred of, and antagonism to, sin, whether it comes upon individuals because of their own sins, or because of the sins of the social organism or community of which they are members, is really and truly a penal consequence of sin.



The pangs of remorse and the pollutions of moral deterioration and corruption, the miseries of bodily pain and mental anguish, the dark experience of physical death<sup>1</sup> as now experienced by men, and the unknown pains of hell hereafter—whether that means continued existence in endless torment, as some think, or ultimate extinction of being after suffering, as others suppose, or a temporary endurance of disciplinary pain hereafter with a view to ultimate restoration, as universalists hope—are among the things that Scripture teaches us to look to as punishment of sin.

(4) The end or purpose of the punishment inflicted on sin is to show forth the glory of God in the vindication of His

<sup>1</sup> The difficult question as to whether physical death is to be regarded as something natural and normal for such a being as man, or as something unnatural and abnormal and the result of human sin, has been answered in different ways by Christian theologians.

Some transition from the earthly to the heavenly mode of life would doubtless have been necessary, even had there been no sin; but Scripture would lead us to believe that physical death, at least in the form in which it is now experienced by man, is not the normal human destiny, but something abnormal and unnatural for a being such as man, issuing as one of the evil fruits of sin. Cf. Candlish, "Doctrine of Sin"; Orr, "God's Image in Man"; Denney, "Studies in Theology."

righteousness and the establishment of His Kingdom.

The showing forth of God's glory by the display of the divine attributes of justice and holiness is one end God sets before Himself in His dealings with mankind. He must express Himself in reference to human sin as hating and condemning it, and this is effected by punishment in its retributive aspect.

Under this aspect of it the end of punishment might be supposed to be secured, whatever the effect on the evil-doers, whether it led to their betterment or to their utter ruin and perdition.

But God's end in His dealings with mankind is not merely to manifest the glory of His holiness, but to do so in such a way as will secure the establishment of a kingdom of loving and obedient subjects in fellowship with Himself. It is His aim, not merely to show forth His glory, but to do so by communicating His own character and blessedness to children made in His image.

So we must conceive of the punishment inflicted by divine justice on sin as having not merely a retributive aim in view, but also a disciplinary and remedial aim, viz.

to warn and correct, and if possible to reform the individual sinner and deter others from following his ways, and thereby to contribute towards that redemption and restoration of our sinful race which is more especially and explicitly the function and aim of divine grace.

God's end in creation could not be realised if His punitive attitude towards sin necessitated, in order that the right might be vindicated, the extermination of the whole human race; if punishment, in addition to being retributive, could not also be remedial; or if God's punitive attitude towards sinners could not be supplemented by a gracious redemptive attitude, which, without prejudice to the cause of justice, might yet make provision for the redemption and restoration of sinful men.

That the punishment imposed by divine justice on sin will, in all individual cases, prove remedial and lead in the end to the sinner's restoration, or that the grace of God in Christ will in the end reach all sinners, and turn them from sin to God and bring them into His Kingdom, is more than Scripture or reason warrants us in affirming.

But that God's plan and purpose in creation have not been foiled by the influx of sin through man's perversity, that a kingdom of men redeemed from sin and brought into free and obedient fellowship with God as loving children has been founded and will assuredly be consummated, and that we ourselves, sinful though we be, may enter that kingdom and share its blessings through faith in Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of sinners and the bringer-in of God's Kingdom among men, is the glorious message of the Christian Gospel.



# THE PERSON OF CHRIST





## V

### THE PERSON OF CHRIST

“This is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”—*John* xvii. 3.

THE Christian conception of the person of Christ is that of One Who in a truly human life has perfectly revealed the being, attributes and purpose of God to mankind; has, in His own person and work as Mediator, effected reconciliation between God and man, and so has furnished the basis for a new humanity, redeemed from sin, reconciled to God, and progressively renewed through union with Him.

The problem of Christ's person and significance may be approached from various starting-points.

(1) We may start from the earthly life and work of Jesus as matter of history, and ask ourselves what is the significance of this Person, and what His place in the universe in relation to God and to us men,

viewed in the light of evolution as a principle seen to be operative in all history. This we might call the historico-biological or anthropological view-point, which fits in with the scientific bias and aspirations of our time.

(2) Again, we may start from the teleological idea of the Kingdom of God, or the perfected society, as the goal of history, and seek to fit in a conception of the place and function of Christ to this comprehensive ideal. This might be called the sociological view-point, which fits in with the socialistic or collectivist ideals and aspirations of the age.

(3) Or we may start from the Christian conception of God the Father Almighty, as ground and source of all that has been, is, and shall be, and seek to fit in a conception of Christ's person to our doctrine of God. This might be called the theological view-point, which commends itself especially to the systematic theologian.

The proper logical order of exposition, no doubt, would be to start from the theological view-point as the highest and most comprehensive, and proceed to show the harmony of the conception of Christ's person reached along this line with that

reached when we approach the matter from the biological and sociological view-points. This was the starting-point from which the conception of the person of Christ was developed in the ancient Catholic Church, and after centuries of discussion and controversy that conception was at length fixed for the ancient Church by the definitions of the Council of Chalcedon in A.D. 451. These are reflected in the definition of Christ's person given in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, which says: "The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, Who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continueth to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever."

As the view-point of history and science, however, commends itself more readily to the modern mind and commands, in most quarters, a readier assent than the view-point of philosophy and theology, which is harder to reach and to maintain, it is well to develop the conception of Christ's person by starting from the historico-biological and sociological view-points, and to lead up from these to the theological conception as the final synthesis. I can

only endeavour in this lecture to state briefly and summarily the results reached by Christian thought from these various starting-points, without attempt at elaborate exposition or proof.

I. What conception, then, of the person of Christ will we reach if we start from the fact of Christ as given in the data of history and religious experience, and seek to interpret Him from the biological point of view in the light of evolutionary science?

(1) The first affirmation we are led to make is that the Jesus of history, as presented in the Gospel narratives and the apostolic testimony, is a truly human personality Who lived His life under the conditions of our human lot, and so can be looked upon by us men as akin to us, our brother man, "in all points tempted like as we are."<sup>1</sup>

Any conceptions or tendencies which have the effect of making Christ's human life unreal or fictitious must be set aside as contrary to history and unacceptable to true Christian experience.

(2) Further, the historic records show us that this historic Jesus lived a life of

<sup>1</sup> Heb. iv. 15.

perfect or ideal manhood, a life in which, so far as we can judge, the highest qualities of manhood were perfectly exhibited in a particular setting, and in perfect fidelity to a great vocation. Though "in all points tempted like as we are," He was yet "without sin." He claimed to be without sin among men, perfect in obedience to God, in love to His fellow-men, and in fidelity to His lofty calling, and so far as we can judge from the records of His life He was thus absolutely free from moral fault of any kind, thereby standing out alone among the children of men who have lived in this world. The attempts that have been made by modern critics, like Mr. Roberts,<sup>1</sup> to point out faults in His character or conduct, can only be described as miserable failures, entirely unconvincing, serving rather to bring out the matchless purity and moral beauty of that human life.

(3) Again, His calling or vocation, as He Himself conceived of it, was a unique one, such as no other could perform, for it was none other than that of being the Saviour of men from sin, and the bringer-in

<sup>1</sup> See Supplement to the *Hibbert Journal* for 1909 on "Jesus or Christ."



of a perfect kingdom of redeemed humanity in moral fellowship with God the Father Almighty. He is represented in the Gospel narratives as being the Messiah, the Founder and Head of God's Kingdom among men, the Saviour and rightful Lord and King of mankind. In fulfilment of this vocation as Saviour of men, in spite of all temptations to turn aside, He freely yielded Himself up to a life of humiliation and suffering, ending with the bitter death on Calvary's cross. Why such suffering and death belonged essentially to the calling of one who was to be the Saviour or Redeemer of sinful men will fall to be considered when we come to speak more especially of the Christian Redemption. Meantime we note it was accepted by Christ as part of His calling as the Messianic King and Saviour, and voluntarily submitted to in fidelity to that calling.

(4) Yet further, the historic records all bear witness to the fact that to this human personality there belonged a unique consciousness of intimate kinship and fellowship with Almighty God as of son with father, implying a unique insight into God's mind and will which was ever sure of itself, though His knowledge as man had its

admitted limits, as when He said He did not know the day or the hour when the Son of Man would come again for the final judgment.<sup>1</sup>

This consciousness of Sonship to God on Christ's part implied such a reproduction in Him of His Father's character, such a reflection in Him of the Almighty Father's mind and will and purpose, as made Him a true revelation of God in the essentials of His character and His saving purpose with mankind. This is implied in the self-testimony of Jesus, as recorded in the synoptic gospels—as, for example, in the saying: "All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him."<sup>2</sup>

This is yet more explicitly brought out by the author of the fourth Gospel, as when he says: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him"<sup>3</sup>; or when he attributes to Jesus such words as these: "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mark xiii. 32.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. xi. 27.

<sup>3</sup> John i. 18.

<sup>4</sup> John xiv. 9.

(5) Finally, the historic records bear unanimous testimony to many wonderful works of power or miracles wrought by Jesus, giving evidence that as a man He was in touch with a spiritual power that could control the forces of nature and adapt them to His purposes.

Of these miracles attesting the presence and working in the world of a spiritual power which acts independently of the laws seen to be ordinarily operative in the natural world, the greatest of all was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and His appearances in bodily form—though changed and transformed in a wonderful way—to His disciples during forty days after His crucifixion. But for the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus convincing His disciples that He had triumphed over sin and death and won for them redemption, the origin and growth of the Christian Church during the period immediately following the crucifixion would be an historical phenomenon altogether inexplicable.

These marvellous exhibitions of power over nature and its normal laws or ways of acting point to an identification of the Supreme Power which we recognise outside

ourselves in nature and providence, and within ourselves as conscience, with the historic personality and consciousness of Jesus Christ. An indication of this uniqueness of the historic human personality of Jesus is given us in the statement made in two of the synoptic gospels, that though born of a human mother, and so genetically connected with the human race, Jesus entered this world in no ordinary way, but by birth of a mother who was a virgin.

On the basis of the historic facts concerning Jesus Christ, attested by reliable witnesses, taken in conjunction with their own experiences of saving and sanctifying influences coming into their lives through faith in Him, the early Christian disciples developed their conception of Christ's person as at the same time true man, unique man, and God in man, One Who rightly evokes from men reverent worship and trust, such as is fitly accorded to God alone.

How are we to conceive of the fact of Christ—of such a unique human personality in intimate union with Almighty God, while yet a true man—from the view-point of evolutionary science, which claims to include all historic reality within its sweep?

If evolution be conceived of as a blind, purposeless process taking place according to chance, and leading towards no predestined goal, then indeed to bring the emergence of the historic person of Christ under the category of evolution as affording any explanation thereof would be to deprive His person of all divine significance and glory.

But if evolution be conceived of theistically, as the process whereby God, by means of His reason or thought going forth in self-expression, unfolds and expresses Himself in history, then to bring the historic Jesus into relation to evolution in nature and in man need not be incompatible with the Scripture idea that He is the Logos or Word of God incarnate.

On the theistic view of evolution, it is the power of God, immanent in, though also transcendent over, the natural world, which is active in the vital process of reproduction. That same power also, not without purpose or design, causes those variations in the progeny resulting from the reproductive energy, which, through the principles of natural selection and survival of the fittest, lead on to the upward movement in the evolutionary process. Chance has no place



at all assigned to it as an explanatory cause of what takes place.

When, therefore (to assume the evolutionary theory of the origin of species), there appeared among the progeny of the supposed simian ancestors of the human race, beings in whom self-conscious thought or reason, and will and conscience were found, this was a variation from parental type of the greatest magnitude, explicable only through the operation of an intelligent power causally active in and behind the evolutionary process and manifesting its nature and purpose therein.

The upward leap which the evolutionary process took when man appeared was thus due to the causal activity of the Word or Reason of God, which is immanent in, and progressively manifested in, the whole process. No other explanation of the emergence of man in the course of evolution is at all reasonable or satisfactory to the inquiring mind.

Now, if it be true, as Christian faith affirms, that man is made in the image of God, this means that in producing this new variety, man, out of sub-human simian ancestors, the power active in evolution produced a form of being in which



the divine life of the Logos might be contained, expressed, or incarnated, in a way that was not possible in connection with any lower form of being. The assertion that man was made in the image of God may be said to imply incarnation, or the self-expression of God in the form of man, as the goal of the creative evolutionary process. To *express* God or the Divine Life under the form and conditions of human existence, as an image expresses that of which it is a likeness, is obviously the true destination of man according to the teaching of Scripture.

But Scripture tells us that the first specimens of this new race of human kind failed, through misuse of their freedom of will, to realise their true divine destiny of expressing or incarnating the Divine Logos or Word, and so the divine purpose of self-manifestation and self-communication to a kingdom of sons reproduced in the divine image was hindered or delayed through the influx of sin into our world, with all its corruptions and consequences.

The first progenitors of the human race fell into sin through misuse of free-will.


Though their being was grounded in the Eternal Logos of God, the source of

all life and true knowledge, yet the Logos could not attain to full expression or incarnation in them because of sin.

The divine purpose, however, was not finally frustrated by human sin. For many centuries in the development of humanity under the hindering influence of sin, divine grace was at work making preparation within the sinful human race for the emergence from it, in the fulness of time, of One in Whom the true idea of manhood would be fully realised, the Divine Logos incarnated or fully expressed under human form, and the basis thus laid for a redeemed and renewed humanity or Kingdom of God.

When in the fulness of time the perfect man appeared in the person of Jesus Christ he was continuous with the race out of which He emerged, being born of a human mother, and therefore a true man.

But as His coming marked a new departure in man's history and development—the beginning of a new kind of humanity in loving and obedient filial relationship to God—it was fitting that this new upward leap in evolution should be marked by something exceptional. And so the man in whom the Divine Logos

became incarnate, while born of a human mother, was born of one who was a virgin. 

There is nothing incredible about this—nothing even that is incompatible with the idea of evolution—for parthenogenesis is not a form of reproduction which is altogether unknown in the world of nature. It serves appropriately to mark the importance of the new departure in the history of humanity, when Christ, the second Adam, appeared on this earth to be the true image of the invisible God, the Word of God incarnate in the form of man.

This, then, is the conception of the Incarnation and person of Christ we reach if we start from the historical standpoint and seek to interpret the fact of Christ in the light of an evolutionary view of history. His appearance on this earth is the crown and consummation of the evolutionary process, in and through which God, through His Word, has been manifesting Himself and seeking ever fuller and more adequate manifestation from the beginning of history. He, as an individual, is the one perfect man, in whom the ideal of manhood, as imaging God, is perfectly realised, for He is “the effulgence of

God's glory, and the express image of His person." <sup>1</sup>

But this idea of the Incarnation as progressively realised or manifested in the historic development and progressive self-manifestation of Christ Jesus as an individual, leads to the further idea that Christ Himself cannot be apprehended in His fulness as an isolated, historic individual, but only as the bearer of a life which in its nature is essentially multiplicative, the Head of the Kingdom of God, and bringer of many sons unto glory.

II. This leads us on, therefore, to the second view-point, from which we may start in seeking to construe the Incarnation and the person of Christ, viz. the sociological or collectivist view-point, which bids us see the world-purpose of God in a perfected society or Kingdom of God. What, then, will be the conception of the person of Christ reached if we start from the teleological idea of the Kingdom of God, or the perfected human society, as the divine goal of world-history? This, too, is an historic point of view, and one which fits in well with the social ideas and aspirations of our day. The social ideal which

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3.

inspires the efforts of earnest social reformers of every variety of type is that of a society in which the greatest welfare and happiness of the greatest possible number will be realised.

From the teleological point of view, salvation is the process by which the divine ideal is realised in society through the establishment of the Kingdom of God among men. This process has two main aspects.

On the one hand it consists in the progressive revelation of the divine will; on the other hand it involves the progressive realisation of that will in society. Now, for Christian faith the place of central importance for the realisation of both these ends belongs to Jesus Christ as the Founder and Head of the Kingdom of God among men, and the Mediator of its blessings to mankind.

He is set before us in Scripture, not only as the supreme revealer of God to men, but as the supreme reconciler of men with God, and His work of reconciliation includes not only humanity but the whole world of nature within its sweep. Christ's work as mediator or reconciler will fall to be dealt with in the next lecture, but meantime as



regards Christ's person we may note that the conception of His person and mission reached along this line of thought implies three things :

(1) It implies that the life incarnate in Christ Jesus is essentially multiplicative in its nature as all true life is. The life which has fulfilled the true human ideal in one representative individual is through Him to be multiplied in many individuals. This is to take place, not, as in the case of lower forms of life, by a multiplication of the animal superstructure, but, by a process in strict accordance with the stage which the evolution has now reached, in the development of the perfected rational and spiritual nature. The means used in this process of spiritual multiplication is what we call Christian faith.

The object of this faith is the Incarnate Son of God, Who is likewise the second Adam, the Head of a new humanity, whose members through Him also become adopted sons of the living God. His life is thus engrafted upon the children of men and is constituting them a spiritual body, an infinitely complex whole, notwithstanding the diversity of the parts.

(2) It implies also that the Incarnation



of God in Christ is the supreme condition on which the goal reached by the individual, of sonship to God, becomes the goal to be attained by the community.

The Christ has never been repeated in history, much less surpassed. His appearance, therefore, is no mere step in the progress of humanity, through which it will yet attain to greater heights than He reached or produce more perfect divine sonship than His. Yet, once His uniqueness is admitted, it must further be recognised as the essential and supreme condition of the attainment of a social or collective goal.

As the Greek Fathers were fond of putting it: "He, the Word of God, became what we are, that He might make us to be what He is."<sup>1</sup>

Grant the appearance of Christ as the manifestation of God in human flesh, with a view to the reproduction of the divine image among the sons of men, and the Incarnation appears as the only road to such a goal, and the social view of the Kingdom of God as the worthy justification of so wondrous a transaction.

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Bk. V, Preface; *cf.* Clement, "Exhortation to Heathen," 1, and Athanasius, "De Incarnatione," 54.

(3) And further it implies that in no single isolated individual can the divine life of the Logos of God be fully reflected or expressed.

Even the second Adam as an individual is in history "the first born of many brethren." In Himself Christ Jesus is indeed "the effulgence of the Divine glory, and the express image of God's person." But Christ Himself is not complete as an isolated individual apart from that body of which He is the Head. For the self-reproduction at which God aims as the goal of history, it is needful that Christ Jesus as man should be the Head and King of a countless number of individuals, the variety of whose interaction shall fully reflect the glory of all the divine attributes. The goal of history is not reached with the coming of Christ the Incarnate Son as an individual, but only with the completion of His work as the Captain of our salvation, whose function it is to bring "many sons unto glory."<sup>1</sup>

The divine image which the perfected community or Kingdom of God is to reflect can only be constituted by each individual, according to his capacity, being conformed to the image of the Incarnate Son. Until

<sup>1</sup> Heb. ii. 10.

this perfected community is thus constituted, the purpose of the Incarnation cannot be fully realised.

III. We are now in a position to try to reach a synthesis of our thought concerning the person of Christ in relation to the world and man by endeavouring to look at the matter from the theological standpoint, and seek to relate the wondrous and potent personality present in the historical Jesus to the conception of God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth.

Basing on the historic record of Christ's life and death and resurrection, on the observation of His potent redeeming influence in promoting the ideal human society or Kingdom of God, and on personal experience of His saving, sanctifying, hope-inspiring influence on our own lives, Christian faith is constrained to confess this person to be none other than God in man, God manifest in human flesh, Immanuel, God with us, Whose coming was predicted by the prophets of religion in past ages. The true deity of Jesus Christ is an article of faith which the Christian Church can never surrender without cutting itself off from the root principle of its life. But if so, this points to an eternal ground in the essential Being

of God, a power, element, or aspect of the divine life which is capable of self-adaptation to human nature, capable of becoming man, and so manifesting the divine life in a human life.

This leads up to the profound conception of the Divine Logos or Word of God, who "in the beginning was with God, and was God."<sup>1</sup>

This conception of the Divine Logos has its roots alike in Hebrew and in Greek thought, and has been taken over probably from both these sources by the author of our fourth Gospel, and made the basis of a profound construction of the person of Christ in relation to God the Father, to the finite world, and to mankind.

According to the ultimate form of Christian thought, God in His essential nature is not to be thought of as simple abstract unity or self-identity without difference or plurality, but as containing a fulness of being or life which may rightly be conceived of as triune—Father, Son, and Spirit. God, as subject of self-conscious thought and feeling and will, has present to Him from all eternity an object of thought and love and volition, His own Logos or Word, be-

<sup>1</sup> John i. 1.

tween Whom and Himself there is an eternal active principle of union, so that the two are one in essential being.

God as Father eternally generates or reproduces Himself in a Son, between Whom and the Father the Eternal Spirit mediates a unity of thought and feeling, of will and life, which constitutes one essential God-head of Father, Son, and Spirit.

This threefoldness, which, according to the Christian conception, is constitutive of the divine eternal life, is reflected according to idealistic philosophy in all reality. The logic of the Hegelian school is an elaborate attempt to show by analysis that our very conception of real existence is the conception of a triunity in which there is thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, after the analogy of God, the Supreme Reality.

Now, according to the Christian conception of the Incarnation, it is not the Father, nor yet the Spirit Who is thought of as being incarnate in Christ Jesus, but the Logos or Son of God, between whom and the Father there is distinction as well as unity.

The Father is and remains transcendent over the world of nature and humanity.



The Logos, or Son, is immanent in the world of nature, of which man is the crown, from the first, guiding and directing the whole course of evolution, and ultimately becoming incarnate or fully expressed as regards character, purpose, and will in the historic personality of Jesus Christ, the perfect man. The Spirit mediates between the immanent Logos, Who becomes incarnate in Christ, and the Father, dwelling in fulness in Christ as the Logos incarnate, and imparting the life of the Logos also to Christ's body, the Church, whereby the purpose of the Incarnation reaches completion. Inasmuch as man has been made in the image of God, the form of man furnishes a form of being in which the Divine Logos can become incarnate without demitting any essential attributes of His Being as God, though the range and mode of exercise of these may be limited, or adapted to the human form of being. And so in Christ, while He was truly man, living under human conditions, we yet see the image of the invisible God, the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His person.

Thus the endeavour to conceive or construe the person of Christ from the theo-



logical standpoint leads us inevitably to formulate a conception of God in His essential and eternal being as triune—Father, Son, and Spirit—such as we find clearly indicated in the Christian Scriptures. And further it leads us to form such a conception of the Divine Logos in relation to the world and man that the incarnation of the Logos in a true historic human personality is not inconceivable.

The doctrine that the Divine Logos is the power of God immanent in all creation, guiding and directing the whole course of evolution, producing man as the ultimate outcome of evolution through which He is seeking ever fuller self-expression, prepares the way for the great affirmation that the Logos has in fulness of time become incarnate in a perfect human individual, with a view thereby of indwelling in a perfected human society or Kingdom of God, under the headship of this perfect individual.

This doctrine, while it furnishes adequate ground for attributing uniqueness to the person of Christ, does not separate or alienate Him from human-kind as if He were no true man, but a being of an entirely different order. Rather it brings Him near,

as very man, though the rightful Head and King of all men.

For the Logos, Whose incarnation in Christ gives to Him His unique dignity and divine glory, is the principle or power of God immanent and progressively expressed in the evolving world of creation generally, and specially in man, creation's crown, who is made "in God's image." The Logos of God is thus immanently present in all men as source of life and knowledge, "the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."<sup>1</sup>

The Divine Logos is "the light of all our seeing," the principle constitutive of proper self-conscious, personal life in all individual men, but immanently present and active in each in varying degrees, proportionate to the different receptivity of individuals.

In Christ Jesus alone among the children of men has the Divine Logos become fully expressed or incarnate in a human life and character. But this does not dehumanise Christ, or lift Him out of the sphere of true humanity. Rather it leads us to see in Him the perfect man, in whom the true ideal of manhood is first fully

<sup>1</sup> John i. 9.

realised, the rightful Head of a redeemed humanity. This is just the giving of full weight to the scriptural conception of man's essential constitution as made in the image of God. It was the failure thus to realise and give effect to the close affinity between the Divine Logos-nature and ideal human nature, which led to difficulties and controversies about the person of Christ in the Early Church.

Where the divine and the human are conceived of as wholly disparate and mutually exclusive, no incarnation of the Divine Logos in human nature is conceivable.

But while we are constrained thus to think of God in His essential being as triune, in order to conceive and make intelligible to ourselves God's self-manifestation in nature and history, in Christ and His body the Church, we must bear in mind that we have, and can have, no knowledge of the essential being of the triune God apart from the actual world of history and experience, through which He manifests Himself to us.

In relation to this, God the Father is the transcendent, almighty power of the divine life, the Source or Creator of all ;

God the Son, or Logos, is the immanent thought or reason and purpose of the divine life present in all, giving movement and life to all, guiding the evolutionary process from the beginning, and becoming incarnate in fulness of time in Christ the perfect man and Head of redeemed humanity; and God the Spirit is the self-imparting power or principle of the divine life, Who imparts the vitality or life manifested in Christ the Incarnate Son to the believing members of His body the Church, thereby constituting them also sons of God and sharers in the divine eternal life.

While constrained to recognise that the self-manifestation of God given to us in nature and history implies a trinity or triunity of essential being, we cannot construe God in His essential being to ourselves in any adequate way, or form any adequate conception of those aspects of life in the essential Godhead which, as historically manifested, we know and worship as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, one God. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"<sup>1</sup> "Now we know in part and prophesy in

<sup>1</sup> Job xi. 7.

part.”<sup>1</sup> And yet “this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.”<sup>2</sup> If the logic that seems to underlie our Christian faith be correct, then the conception of God the ultimate reality as not simple abstract unity, in Unitarian fashion, but as a fulness of life involving plurality and distinctions as well as unity, as a synthesis involving the unity of apparent opposites, an essential trinity or triunity of being, is not an irrational or illogical, but a theoretically valid logical conception for us.

But though logic may supply us with a valid form of thought under which to conceive of God, the content for the filling in of this form can be derived only from actual history and experience, or revelation.

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. xiii. 9.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 3.

## THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION





## VI

### THE CHRISTIAN SALVATION

“He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin ; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”—*2 Cor.* v. 21.

THROUGH the entrance of sin into the world, and its spread throughout the human race, mankind became guilty and corrupt in moral nature, estranged from the holy God, under divine condemnation, and exposed to pain and suffering and death, both of body and soul, which, under a righteous moral order, are the penal consequences of sin.

Hence the need for salvation or redemption, which, according to the Christian faith, the Word of God became incarnate in human flesh in order to bring to sinful perishing men.

This salvation consists essentially in deliverance from sin and its dire effects, and elevation from the state of alienation and estrangement into a state of reconciliation

and fellowship with God, and of participation in the blessings of eternal life.

The Christian conception of salvation includes affirmations as to what Christ Jesus has done and is still doing to effect the salvation of sinful men, and also as to what sinners as individuals need to do in order that the salvation may be realised in their experience. The former of these topics will be considered in this lecture, the latter in the next and concluding lecture.

As regards the work of Christ in "effecting redemption," Christian faith, based on the testimony of the Scripture witnesses, leads us to think of this as threefold in character, viz. prophetic, priestly, and kingly. These functions or offices of perfect prophet, perfect priest, and perfect king, fulfilled by Christ as our Redeemer, though not separable in reality are distinguishable in thought, and for clearness' sake it is desirable to consider them separately, while bearing in mind that they are but three different aspects of the one redemptive work.

I. Regarding the prophetic office of Christ there is little difficulty and little diversity of opinion among Christian thinkers of all schools.

A prophet, according to the Scripture

conception, is a man directly commissioned and specially qualified to speak for God to men, inspired with an authoritative message and supported by credentials which win for him acceptance with his fellow-men.

In all these respects Christ Jesus perfectly fulfils the conditions of the prophetic office.

Even those who do not accept the higher view of His person implied in the statement that He is the Word of God incarnate, agree in accepting Him as a great prophet of God, revealing religious truth to men, the greatest prophet that has appeared on this earth. The main difference between the Unitarian conception of Christ as a prophet and the Catholic Christian conception is that while on the Unitarian view there is no guarantee that a greater prophet than Christ may not yet appear, on the Catholic view He is necessarily the final and perfect prophet as being the Divine Logos or Word incarnate, the "effulgence of God's glory and the express image of His person."<sup>1</sup>

No higher revelation of divine truth can be looked for by man than that which has come to the world through the incarnate Word. He has revealed God's character

<sup>1</sup> Heb. i. 3.

and will and purpose in a way that can never be superseded or surpassed, and that not by His words only but by His whole life and behaviour. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."<sup>1</sup> "God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds."<sup>2</sup>

Yet though He was the Word Incarnate, we are told in Scripture that Jesus increased in wisdom as in stature.<sup>3</sup> As a prophet He has revealed God's character and will and purpose to mankind in a way that is adequate for all the needs of our present life, and cannot be superseded or surpassed. Yet, as man, His knowledge was subject to human conditions and limitations and was not omniscience.

He Himself testified that there were things of which He the Son was ignorant, such as the day and hour when He should come again to judge the world.<sup>4</sup> It is somewhat

<sup>1</sup> John i. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. i. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Luke ii. 52.

<sup>4</sup> Mark xiii. 35.

precarious to speculate as to the extent or limitations of His human knowledge, though we have express warrant in His own words, apart from speculative considerations, in affirming limitations. His special and sure knowledge of God and divine things, which He declared with authority, was not, it would seem, incompatible with a limited human knowledge of things, to know which was not essential to His prophetic function as perfect revealer of God to man. We can trust Him absolutely in all He declares with authority concerning God and His purposes, as Son of God knowing and expressing His Father's will, while we accept His own declaration as to limitations to His knowledge, not indeed as rendering unreliable in any measure what He does claim to know and declare as truth, but as showing His true humanity, and thus bringing Him nearer to us in the kinship of truly human life.

Closely associated with His prophetic ministry were the works of healing and other miracles wrought by Him, which cannot be eliminated from the story of His life on earth without rendering that life and the origin and growth of the Christian Church altogether unintelligible and inex-



plicable. These mighty works were no meaningless marvels, but were fitted to reveal the gracious, redemptive, restorative character of His mission, while they served also to attest and accredit His prophetic message in the eyes of men. They cannot, any more than His authoritative teaching, be dissociated from His wondrous and unique personality, though they do not lift Him out of the category of true humanity. They were wrought by Him as Son of Man, in intimate and constant union with God His Father, Whose power was at His disposal for the doing of the divine will. In some measure the power to perform similar works of healing was imparted to His disciples. But their works of healing were wrought in His name, thus bearing additional testimony to the fact that this healing, restorative power was connected with Christ Himself as Mediator of salvation, with all its blessings, to mankind. ○

II. As regards the priestly work of Christ with a view to the salvation of sinful men, there is greater difficulty and greater diversity of view among Christian thinkers.

The generally accepted faith among Chris-

tians on this matter is briefly expressed in the familiar words, "Christ as our Redeemer executeth the office of a priest in His once offering up of Himself a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, and reconcile us to God, and in making continual intercession for us." <sup>1</sup>

The interpretation here put upon the sacrifice of Christ, in life and in death, as ministering towards salvation, implies that the entrance of human sin has raised a barrier between God and men which must be removed if reconciliation is to be brought about and loving fellowship established as of children with a father.

This barrier has two sides or aspects: one affecting God and His relation or attitude to men, and the other affecting sinful men and their attitude towards God.

(1) On God's side, sin, while it does not alter God's personal love and pity for sinners and His desire for their restoration, alters His attitude as righteous Lawgiver and Judge from one of complacent satisfaction to one of condemnation or disapproval, which must express itself in some adequate way.

The eternal moral order of the universe,

<sup>1</sup> Westminster Shorter Catechism, Q. 25.

which is grounded in God's holy will, requires that His hatred and condemnation of sin, and His attitude towards those who commit sin, should find adequate expression. This is what grounds the necessity for punishment or penalty in the shape of pain and suffering and loss being attached to sin as its necessary consequence. One main end of penalty is to give expression to God's eternal antagonism to sin as that which He cannot tolerate or overlook or treat lightly as though it were not.

This need for self-expression on God's part in condemnation of human sin must be adequately met and satisfied, and its rightness accepted and acquiesced in on man's behalf, if the broken fellowship is to be restored, and sinful man not kept permanently aloof under divine disapproval and condemnation.

And while on God's side the need for adequate self-expression in relation to human sin hinders the free forthgoing of His complacent love towards sinful men, on man's side sin produces dullness of spiritual vision, fear and distrust and opposition towards God, moral depravity and helplessness and inability, which need to be removed by a new vitalising moral

influence ere there can be reconciliation and restored fellowship.

This is the situation, on God's side and on man's, which needs to be met and provided for in any effectual work of redemption and reconciliation. And it is the message of the Gospel that this situation has been met and provided for by the priestly work of Christ Jesus, the "one Mediator between God and man."<sup>1</sup>

On the one hand, God's holy justice requires that human sin should be condemned, and that the rightness of this condemnation should be accepted and acquiesced in on man's side. And this need has been met by Christ, the Sinless Man, as vicarious sufferer for His brethren of mankind, in a way in which no other could have met it. In His sufferings and death on the cross He was enduring, as sin-bearer for His brethren, the divine condemnation of the sin of that race whose responsible representative Head He had voluntarily become when He took our nature.

No doubt His sufferings and death came upon Him at the hands of wicked men. But behind the secondary human causes

<sup>1</sup> 1 Tim. ii. 5.

there was the hand of God in it all. This was detected by the ancient seer when, speaking of the sufferings endured by God's righteous servant in the sinful world, he said: "It pleased the Lord to bruise him; He hath put him to grief: when Thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed."<sup>1</sup> The hand of God behind the hand of wicked men in the sufferings inflicted on Christ was seen also by Peter when, in preaching to the Jews on the day of Pentecost, he said, speaking of Christ: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain."<sup>2</sup>

And it was seen by Jesus Himself when, in His agony in the garden, looking forward to His coming sufferings and death, He said: "The cup that My Father giveth Me to drink, shall I not drink it?"<sup>3</sup>

The fact that the sufferings and death of the sinless Christ were, when we go to the root of the matter, God-inflicted, is a fact to which we cannot shut our eyes.

And what explanation or justification

<sup>1</sup> Isa. liii. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Acts ii. 23.

<sup>3</sup> John xviii. 11.

can be given of that bitter suffering and awful death on the cross, with its accompanying strange experience of God-forsakenness leading to the cry: "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Why does this righteous One thus suffer at the hands of the just God? Why, except it be that He has become so identified with human sin as the Representative and Head of our sinful race, that the penalty due to our sin has been visited upon Him?

This is Paul's explanation of it.

"God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh."<sup>1</sup> "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."<sup>2</sup> And Jesus Himself recognised that the Son of Man had come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many,"<sup>3</sup> and that His blood was to be "shed for many unto remission of sins."<sup>4</sup>

Thus in the sufferings and death of Christ we are taught to see God's condemnation of human sin in the person of

<sup>1</sup> Rom. viii. 3.

<sup>2</sup> 2 Cor. v. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xx. 28.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxvi. 28.



His beloved Son, Who, though Himself sinless, had out of love become the responsible Head and Representative of our sinful, God-condemned race.

And in voluntarily accepting and drinking this bitter cup of vicarious suffering and death for our sins, as our Head and Representative, Christ Jesus has done what no sinful man whose heart was alienated from God by sin could have done. He has, as man and for man, accepted and acquiesced in the rightness of the divine condemnation of sin experienced in His own representative person. He has said "Amen" for Himself, and all who adhere to Him, to the justice of the divine condemnation of sin.

This is the very marrow or essence of the atonement or satisfaction to the claims of divine justice which He has offered. He has identified Himself in sympathy and acquiescence, as representative man, with the divine attitude of condemnation in regard to human sin, and that not merely under a keen mental realisation of God's wrath and condemnation, but under an actual experience of it as vicarious sin-bearer for our sinful race. And by so doing He has removed the obstacle on God's

side towards receiving sinful men into His favour and fellowship. All the interests of justice and of the moral government of the world have been met and satisfied through the sacrifice which Christ as priest has offered for men. God did not indeed need to be appeased, nor His personal love called forth by any propitiatory sacrifice. But the claims of the violated moral order had to be vindicated, and the interests of holy justice and righteous government conserved in any reconciliation with sinful man that could take place on God's part.

And this has been accomplished through the propitiatory sacrifice which God Himself has provided, and which Christ, the Son of God and Son of Man, has offered up as the Representative and High Priest of humanity.<sup>1</sup>

God's condemnation of sin has received adequate and effective expression in the suffering and death of our Head, Who vicariously "bare our sins in His own body on the tree,"<sup>2</sup> and, by thus enduring in patient submission and obedience, made

<sup>1</sup> As some one has said: "Because God is Light, He requires this propitiation; because He is Love, He provides it."

<sup>2</sup> 1 Pet. ii. 24.

expiation and rendered satisfaction to the claims of retributive justice. Because of this expiation, this endurance of sin's just condemnation by One Who has the right to represent humanity before God and undertake its burden and responsibilities, God can be "just and the justifier"<sup>1</sup> of all who through faith become one with Christ. God's grace in salvation is manifested, not by His abrogating or annulling the claims of righteous law, which would mean an upsetting of the eternal moral order on which the universe is founded, but by His making provision for the meeting of these in such a way as makes remission of penalty for sinful men possible and just.

This objective or juridical aspect of Christ's atoning work as the offering-up of a sacrifice on behalf of sinful men, to satisfy Divine justice, is abundantly attested by the New Testament writers, who unanimously interpret Christ's sacrifice in the light of the Old Testament sacrificial system.

Various theories have indeed been brought forward, especially in recent times, to explain the manner in which the Old Testament sacrifices were conceived of as

<sup>1</sup> Rom. iii. 26.

operating efficaciously in mediating blessing to sinful man. Thus, there is the theory put forward by Bähr in Germany, and by F. D. Maurice and others in England, that the sacrifice in the Old Testament dispensation was conceived of as being merely the vehicle for the expression of the offerer's devout sentiments and longings. The purpose of the sacrifice, as with prayer, is to serve as an index of what is in the worshipper's heart, and its virtue is exhausted in bringing this before God. It is but an embodied prayer, the symbol of the self-surrender of heart and will to God on the part of the offerer. But this, though it may be in a measure true, does not exhaust the significance of the Old Testament sacrifices as set forth in Scripture. Various thoughts and associations no doubt gathered round the complicated sacrificial system which arose among the Hebrews, and helped to explain its growth and development, so that it is difficult to find a rigid unity or consistency running through it all.

But the old and familiar idea of expiation of guilt through the suffering and death of an innocent victim who bears vicariously the penalty of the offerer's transgressions, seems to be clearly embodied

in many of the Old Testament sacrifices, notably that offered on the Day of Atonement, where a transference of guilt is plainly suggested, and the flesh of the victim to whom the guilt has thus been transferred is treated as unclean.

This, at all events, would seem to be the interpretation of the Old Testament sacrifice of atonement adopted by Peter and Paul and John and the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, who see in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross the adequate fulfilment of the idea of expiation through a sin-bearing victim, which was dimly foreshadowed in the Old Testament sacrificial system.

This objective, Godward aspect of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, while it is clearly present in the New Testament writings, was first systematically developed in Christian theology by Anselm of Canterbury, from whom, with various modifications, it has been taken over into the theology of the reformed Churches generally.

There are some, indeed, who find difficulty in accepting it. Some stumble at the idea of there being any barrier on God's side hindering the outgoing of His complacent love towards sinners, and needing to be removed by sacrifice or propitiation.



God is Love. Why then cannot He pardon and receive sinners freely, without any propitiation or expiation being rendered ?

The fact that, according to Scripture, God Himself has provided the needful propitiation by sending Christ His Son into our sinful world, shows indeed that there was no need of sacrifice or propitiation to evoke God's personal love for sinners or make Him willing for reconciliation.

It does not follow, however, that God, as upholder of the eternal moral order, can, at will, and without cost, forgive sinners, overlooking or ignoring their sin and treating it as though it were not. His righteous nature requires Him to express Himself against sin in disapproval and condemnation. This self-expression must be provided for and man's acquiescence therein made manifest ere there can be righteous reconciliation with sinners.

And it is such self-expression of God and such acquiescence of man that is provided for in the sacrifice offered up by Christ.

In this matter of self-expression with reference to human sin the mind of the Father and of the Son are in agreement. The suffering and death inflicted by the Father's hand on Christ, the sacrificial victim,



as Representative and Sin-bearer for His sinful brethren of mankind, is acquiesced in and endorsed by Christ Himself, in the drinking of the bitter cup, as what is due to human sin by His Father's will.

God's grace in salvation does not abrogate the claims of His holy law, but rather provides for their being honoured and fulfilled by a Redeemer Who is able so to do, and to become the Head of a redeemed and renewed humanity. For the death of Christ on the cross, as representative Sin-bearer, is fitted to become efficacious through faith as the death also of His believing members, who through identification with Him become "dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

Some, again, have stumbled at the idea of there being anything penal in the sufferings and death of Christ. It has seemed impossible to them to think of the sufferings and death of the sinless Jesus as penalty or penal suffering inflicted by God and accepted by Christ on account of human sin, of which He was personally innocent.

Now, as we have already seen, on any theistic view of God's relation to the world and to what happens therein, the sufferings


<sup>1</sup> Rom. vi. 11.

and death of Christ, however due to the malice and enmity of wicked men, must ultimately be traced back to the ordaining will of God, as Christ Himself recognised. And from this point of view, regarded as inflicted by the ordaining will of God, no other rationale of Christ's sufferings and death can be given except that which interprets them as penal evils imposed by the divine will on human sin as marking His condemnation thereof, and endured vicariously by Christ as the Head and Representative of our sinful race.

At bottom, all the pain and suffering and death resulting from sin in a world governed by a living God, can only be rationally interpreted as penal evil following by divine appointment upon sin as its proper consequence, though it is a mistake to suppose that the distribution of this penal suffering on account of sin among men is in proportion to the blameworthiness of the individuals who suffer under it. This is to leave out of account the fact of the organic unity or racial solidarity of mankind, on the basis of which God's dealings with men are, as matter of fact, grounded. In consequence of this racial solidarity it often happens that the innocent suffer with and for the guilty.

Their suffering is penal evil due to sin, though the sin is not their own individual sin, but that of others with whom they are bound up in the one web of life. This is a patent fact of observation in human life. And the endurance by Christ of the penal evils of suffering and bitter death because of human sin is but the crowning illustration in history of such vicarious suffering of the innocent for the guilty. The difficulty felt by some about regarding Christ's suffering as penal evil due to sin, serving to express the divine condemnation thereof, arises from looking at the matter from a purely individualistic point of view,—as though the members of the human family were a congeries of isolated independent units, each living for himself alone,—and ignoring the organic unity or solidarity of the race.

When the principle of organic connection is admitted and seen to be the basis on which God's dealings with men are grounded, there is no longer any difficulty in recognising that the sufferings of the innocent may be penal evils due to the sin of others with whom they are vitally connected. And it becomes possible also to conceive that such suffering of penal evils by the innocent

for the guilty, if borne with patience and acquiescence in God's will, may come to have not only a propitiatory effect Godwards, but also a remedial or healing effect manwards. 

(2) This leads us on to the second aspect or side of Christ's atoning work, viz. its efficacy towards removing the obstacles or hindrances which sin causes on man's side in the way of reconciliation and fellowship with God. Through Christ's propitiatory sacrifice, offered within humanity and for man by our representative Head and High Priest, God has been reconciled to man, His condemnation of human sin has been adequately expressed and acquiesced in, the moral order has been vindicated, the requirements of holy law satisfied, so that sinners can be righteously forgiven and accepted in Christ without prejudice to the interests of justice.

All bar on God's side in the way of reconciliation has been effectually removed, and that by a way of God's own provision. But what of the hindrances and obstacles on man's side?

Sin produces on man's side a sense of guilt, a feeling of being under divine disapproval and condemnation. It produces feelings

of fear and distrust in relation to God. It dulls the mind and alienates the heart and enslaves the will, so that there is moral inability and helplessness. If, then, Christ's atoning work as Redeemer is to be effectual towards bringing about reconciliation, it must deal with and remove these obstacles and hindrances on man's side. And this it is fitted to do. It removes the sense of guilt and condemnation from the believer's mind by the assurance it brings of forgiveness through divine grace. It removes the feelings of fear and distrust, and awakens instead feelings of gratitude and confident trust, by the assurance it conveys of God's wondrous self-sacrificing love.

"God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."<sup>1</sup> "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and gave His Son to be the propitiation for our sin."<sup>2</sup> The love and grace of God revealed in the provision He has made for the salvation of sinners through the Incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Christ His Son, when duly appreciated by the mind, is fitted to melt the hard heart and move the stubborn will and remove the subjective

<sup>1</sup> Rom. v. 8.

<sup>2</sup> 1 John iv. 10.



hindrances to reconciliation on the side of sinful men as nothing else can do.

This is the element of truth in what are known as "moral-influence" theories of the atoning work of Christ. Such theories ignore or reject the "objective" aspect of Christ's sacrifice as serving to "satisfy divine justice," and assume that the only problem was to induce in sinful men a change of heart. They limit the significance and efficacy of Christ's atoning work to its subjective moral influence on the minds and hearts and wills of sinful men, leading them to put away fear and distrust, awakening feelings of love and trust, overcoming their self-will and moral impotence, and quickening them to willing self-surrender and obedient service. Now, there is no doubt much truth in this view as to how Christ's work as Redeemer proves efficacious for the salvation of sinful men. The Atonement, though a work effected for us which we could never do ourselves, is not a work accomplished altogether outside us. It is a work done *for* us, but also accomplished *in* us, and this subjective aspect of it cannot be ignored or lost sight of. It is only when the atoning sacrifice offered up by Christ on Calvary leads individual sinners



to know the love of God and to respond to it with answering love that the work of atonement or reconciliation is complete. And the power of the divine love revealed in the mission and work of Christ to melt the heart and change the will of sinners who come under its influence can scarcely be made too much of as an element in the Atonement contributory to man's salvation.

But when this subjective "moral influence" aspect of Christ's atoning work, which is true and important as an element in a complete view of Christ's work of Redemption, is taken as exhausting the significance of that work, to the exclusion of any objective, Godward aspect, its inadequacy cannot but become apparent.

It fails to embrace and do full justice to the language of Christ Himself, as well as of His apostles, in regard to the significance and purpose of His death. It fails also to furnish a sufficient ground in reason for the cup of suffering and death which Christ drank as given Him by the Father, and so fails in making clear how the cross serves to show forth the divine love.

The wondrous sacrifice of the incarnate Son of God in His voluntarily accepted

humiliation and suffering and bitter death, serves indeed to show forth the great love of God to sinful men if that sacrifice is seen to be grounded in an eternal necessity of the moral order—the necessity of adequate expiation being made for sin through endurance of sin's penalty—as the Catholic view asserts. But if this necessity for the endurance of suffering and death by Christ as Representative and Sin-bearer for His sinful brethren of mankind, be taken away or denied, then the humiliation and suffering and sacrifice seem to be gratuitous, and so lose their power to reveal love.

Suffering and sacrifice, undertaken by one to save many, because only in this way can they be saved from impending destruction, serves indeed to show forth love in the highest and most impressive form.

But if the suffering and sacrifice be not grounded in any real necessity, independent of the mere desire to exhibit love—if it be undergone merely as a scenic display, with a view to show forth love—it becomes something fantastic and fails of its purpose. A gratuitous endurance of needless pain and suffering merely to show forth love seems to sober reason to show forth folly rather than love.

The power of the sacrifice of Himself offered up by the Son of God on Calvary's cross to impress us with a sense of the greatness of the divine love, and so move our hearts, has depended on the conviction that this great sacrifice was necessary to expiate human sin in God's sight, and deliver sinners from the doom of eternal death which was hanging over them on account of sin. Only a necessity so urgent as this could justify or make reasonable so stupendous a sacrifice. But if this necessity in relation to sin and its removal be denied, if no other ground in reason or necessity for the incarnation and suffering and death of the Son of God can be alleged beyond the need for making an impressive display of divine love, so as to influence men morally—then the power of Christ's sacrifice to impress us with a sense of the greatness of divine love is taken away.

The "moral influence" theory fails to recognise and take due account of the bearing of sin as "that which ought not to be" in affecting the relation and attitude of God as moral Lawgiver to men as well as of men to God.

Every theory of the Atonement which fails to bring Christ's sufferings and death

into relation to human sin as the self-expression of God in opposition thereto—His condemnation of sin in human flesh—fails to furnish an adequate ground for that suffering and death, or to show the necessity for Christ's sacrifice in order to man's salvation.<sup>1</sup>

But while many theories which men have put forward in explanation of the meaning and efficacy of Christ's sacrifice may be inadequate and unsatisfactory, humble believers in Jesus Christ as Saviour may reap all the benefits of His saving work in forgiveness and assurance of God's love, even though their ideas as to the ground of its necessity, or the mode of its efficacy, may be hazy, or inadequate, or mistaken.

The efficacy for us of Christ's atoning sacrifice and priestly mediation does not, thank God, depend on our having clear or correct ideas as to its rationale, though such may help us to appreciate and prize aright His work as our Redeemer.

As our great High Priest, Christ has not only offered the one sacrifice for sins for ever, but He makes continual intercession for us before God, as One Whose atoning

<sup>1</sup> On modern theories of the redemptive work of Christ, see further, Note G in Appendix.

sacrifice can cover and expiate all the transgressions of those who have become joined to Him in faith as the members of His body. "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins."<sup>1</sup>

In the thought of His sacrifice and intercession we gain assurance of forgiveness, and are enabled to "draw near with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and find grace to help us in our time of need."<sup>2</sup>

Having Him as our great High Priest before God, we need no other priest to mediate between us and God, but can go to God direct, each one for himself, pleading the name and sacrifice of Christ, our Redeemer and Head.

III. But Christ as our Redeemer is our King as well as our Prophet and our Priest, and we may regard the salvation He has brought to us not only as enlightenment in the knowledge of God and His will, and deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, but also as introduction into the fellowship of a perfect kingdom under Him as King and Head.

<sup>1</sup> 1 John ii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. iv. 16.



The Kingdom of God, which Christ came to establish among men, and which He is continually extending by the influences of His Word and Spirit, is the gathering together of men of every tribe and tongue and kindred, under the law of righteous love, written on the tables of our hearts by the Holy Spirit of God, who applies to individuals the redemption won by Christ for men, and makes us partakers of His life and blessedness.

Of this Kingdom all true Christian believers, to whatever Church organisation they may belong, are subjects and citizens. It is a kingdom which is being realised in part among men on earth as Christ's spirit of love and brotherhood gains possession of the hearts of men and moulds the relations and institutions of human society in the family, the State, and the Church.

But in its final truth the Kingdom of God, whose King Christ is, is a supramundane kingdom which is not of this world. And while its influence may and should be felt in shaping the lives and moulding the institutions and social arrangements of men and nations on this earth, we look for its full realisation to a spiritual realm—"a



new heaven and a new earth ”<sup>1</sup>—whence sin has been for ever banished, and where sorrow and death shall be no more.

And while as Christians we pray that God's Kingdom may come among men and His Will be done on earth as in heaven, it is to the heavenly realisation of that perfect Kingdom that our hopes are directed as the gathering mists of death arise around us to remind us that here we have “no continuing city.”<sup>2</sup>

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who shall change the body of our humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto the body of His glory, according to the working whereby He is able to subdue all things unto Himself.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xxi. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Heb. xiii. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Phil. iii. 20, 21.

THE APPROPRIATION OF REDEMP-  
TION BY THE INDIVIDUAL



## VII

### THE APPROPRIATION OF REDEMPTION BY THE INDIVIDUAL

“By grace are ye saved, through faith.”—*Eph.* ii. 8.

HAVING considered what Christ as the Mediator has done and is doing to effect the redemption of sinful men, it remains for us to consider what is necessary on the part of sinners themselves in order that the Christian salvation may be appropriated and realised in their experience. When the Philippian jailer, awakened to a sense of his sin, and to fear and unrest on account of it, cried out to Paul and Silas: “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” they replied with unhesitating confidence: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

The unanimous testimony of the New Testament writers is that the condition,

<sup>1</sup> Acts xvi. 30, 31.

on man's side, of the appropriation and realisation of redemption, is *faith*, and, specifically, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. And in thus attaching supreme importance to faith as conditioning salvation, the New Testament writers are but carrying out or fulfilling what is implicit in the teaching of the inspired prophets of the Old Testament also, who taught that "the just shall live by faith."<sup>1</sup>

What then, let us ask, is the nature and significance of religious faith, and particularly of that Christian faith or faith in the Lord Jesus Christ to which in the New Testament so much importance is attached as the condition of salvation for sinful men?

I. Faith, or belief in general as an attitude or activity of the human soul, may be defined as the voluntary response of the human soul in intellectual assent and practical submission to that which presents itself to the mind claiming to be true, or real and reliable.

It is an activity of the soul, or of the whole personality, involving an exercise of the faculties of will and feeling as well as of intellect.

<sup>1</sup> Hab. ii. 4.

The intellect formulates a conception, more or less definite, of that which presents itself to us claiming to be true or real. The will gives its *assent* to the claim, and affirms the truth or reality of the thing in question. And feeling joins with will in this, and takes up a practical attitude of submission or surrender to what the intellect conceives and the will affirms as true or real. So that among the contents of faith or belief as an act of the soul we must include, with St. Augustine,<sup>1</sup> *notitia*, *assensus*, and *fiducia*.

Now, this faculty of faith or belief, whose power for good or evil among men is incalculably great, may be exercised in illegitimate and unworthy, as well as in reasonable and legitimate ways.

Sometimes our assent may be given to what we are invited to hold for true or real, on bad or insufficient evidence—evidence, that is, which should not be enough to win assent from a sound and sober mind. In our haste or impatience, or in our self-will influenced by passion or prejudice, or in our want of interest and earnestness, we give our assent to and hold as true that which has no reasonable claim

<sup>1</sup> Augustine, "Confessions," III. 183.



to be so regarded. This is foolish or thoughtless credulity.

On the other hand, sometimes, in obstinacy or discontent or pessimism of temper, men may disbelieve or withhold their assent from that which is sufficiently established by evidence such as ought to carry conviction to the sound and honest mind. This is obstinate unbelief or unreasonable scepticism. Rational and legitimate belief or faith occurs when we give our assent to what claims to be true, on grounds that are reasonable and fitted to carry conviction to every sound and well-balanced mind. Such rational belief furnishes the foundation for useful and effective life and conduct for men, just as irrational or false belief leads men astray, and lands them in confusion and misery.

“By far the largest part of human misery,” says Professor Gwatkin, “is the work of human impatience and discontent. By impatience of thought we pervert or set aside the evidence before us, that we may give ourselves licence to believe what pleases us better than truth. By impatience of action we rush at something we like better than right and goodness, pushing our neighbours out of the way, and, if

need be, tyrannising over them. In a more passive discontent we cherish our grievances against the order of things, and fill our hearts with bitterness.”<sup>1</sup>

Belief always involves an element of will, and the danger of false belief arises from our proneness to self-will. We are prone to believe what, for one reason or another, we wish to be true, so that the wish is apt to become father of the thought or the belief.

To attain to right and reasonable beliefs in the different spheres of life is the part of wisdom, and calls for simple honesty and earnestness of mind and self-control.

“Sit down before fact,” says Huxley, “as a little child; be prepared to give up every preconceived notion, to follow humbly wherever Nature leads you, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this.”<sup>2</sup>

II. An element of faith or belief enters into all our knowledge. Our so-called natural knowledge, which it is the work of natural science to systematise, is built ultimately on a basis of faith or belief.

<sup>1</sup> Gwatkin, “The Knowledge of God,” I. p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by W. R. Inge in “Faith and its Psychology,” p. 200.

We affirm as true or real not only that which is immediately given or presented to us in our conscious experience through the senses, but also the results reached by our reason or intellect in collating the given material under those laws which regulate our human thinking.

It is thus that we affirm as true, and believe in, the real existence of the self or soul as the permanent, underlying subject of all experience, and the real existence of a not-self or objective world of things over against the self, giving rise to sensations or impressions which the self experiences, but which it knows it has not caused or originated. And we assume that the causal connections which the thinking mind discovers and affirms as existing between things in this objective world are true and real. In other words, we affirm that that which satisfies the reason or the thinking mind in its observation of, and inferences concerning, the material presented to us in conscious experience, is objectively true or real. But this implies an act of faith or belief, a belief in the trustworthiness of our senses, and in the reliability and competence of our thought or reason to penetrate to the truth of things.

The man of science believes firmly in the uniformity of nature, i.e. that there is law and order, discoverable and appreciable by the human mind in every part of it, that it is permeated through and through by reason and purpose which it is possible for the human mind to find out and understand. It is this belief which stimulates him to apply his mind persistently and unweariedly to the problems presented in experience, in the assured confidence that the world is there to be understood, that things have a meaning, that they are related together according to discoverable laws, and that the mind or reason of man, by application of the laws of thought, can discover and understand the laws of things.

This affirmation of the intelligibility of the world is an act of faith or belief. But it is an act of faith which we find ourselves constrained as rational beings to make. It is the foundation of all our knowledge and all our action—the fundamental and necessary presupposition of all rational life and conduct; and this is all the justification it needs or can receive. It is a belief progressively verified in our experience by the fact that it is found to work and to yield

results which give good guidance for practical conduct and lead to the enrichment and enlargement of human life. At bottom this faith of the man of science in the rationality and intelligibility of nature is a theistic faith, though its theistic implicates are not usually worked out or realised by the scientist who makes use of it. For if the universe is rational and intelligible throughout, penetrated through and through by thought and purpose similar to the reason of man's mind, this implies that it is the product or manifestation of a mind, similar to, though infinitely greater than, the human mind by which its meaning is being progressively discovered and appreciated as the ages advance.

III. But while faith or belief is an element present in our natural or so-called scientific knowledge, it is most conspicuously present and operative in the religious sphere.

Religious belief is a particular phase or form of belief which owes its significance and importance to the character of its object or content.

All belief is not of the same value or importance. Many true and attainable beliefs are so unimportant that they are not



worth seeking after, nor need we trouble ourselves as to what evidence there may be for them.

Beliefs as to higher things have claims upon us which beliefs as to lower concerns have not, and demand from us more anxious inquiry as to whether they are true or false. Belief in one living and true God is of such urgent and immense practical importance for individuals and nations that the grounds of it call for the most earnest and careful study from all.

To believe credulously and superstitiously in the gods many and lords many of heathen religions is foolish and sinful and pernicious ; but not less sinful and harmful to practical life is it to withhold belief and homage and trust from the one living and true God, Who has given to all men sufficient cause or reason for believing in Him.

In its widest sense religious belief is the voluntary response of the human soul to God's self-revelation in nature and history and conscience or moral experience—books open to all men alike.

The self-revelation of God in nature has already been touched upon in referring to the scientific man's belief in the uniformity of nature or the presence of intelligible law



and order and purpose in all nature, which is the postulate of science in general.

This belief in the unity and intelligibility of the universe for human thought implies at bottom a theistic belief that it is the product and manifestation of infinite mind.

“The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world,” says St. Paul, “are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and godhead,”<sup>1</sup> so that men are without excuse for not believing in God.

And when, to the evidence for God as an almighty and intelligent or purposeful will-power manifested in and behind the natural world, with its unity and order and purpose—partly discovered by man and partly undiscovered, yet reasonably believed in—we add the evidence of the providential events of human history pointing to an overruling power making for righteousness among men, and the evidence furnished by conscience or the moral consciousness, where a holy and righteous will above our own is continually borne witness to, the grounds for belief in the existence of one living and true God become increasingly strong and cogent.

The self-revelation of God in nature and

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 20.

history and conscience is the basis or foundation of all the religious beliefs to be found so universally among men. These are the response of the human soul to the truth of the ultimate reality thus revealed. This response, however, is not always right or reasonable or in accordance with the evidence.

Among the multitudinous religious beliefs to be found in the world many are false and illegitimate, and so mischievous and harmful.

Among these are the belief in many gods rather than in one living and true God, which is the error underlying all forms of Polytheism ; the belief in special incarnations of God in inanimate things or lower animals or sinful men, which underlies the various forms of fetichism and idolatry, by which men are held in the bondage of superstition ; the belief in God as arbitrary and capricious and changeable in His ways, or as cruel, tyrannical, and unholy in His acts, needing to be appeased or made favourable by costly gifts or meaningless sacrifices.

How are such false and illegitimate religious beliefs to be accounted for ? Mainly by this, that there are many *causes* of religious belief among men which are not valid or sufficient *reasons* for such belief.

The most general glance over the religions of the world is enough to show that the religious beliefs of men have been largely affected by their surroundings—by the powers and aspects of nature, as imperfectly understood by them, by geographical conditions and racial peculiarities, and other external causes.

The genius and disposition of the various races and communities of men affect the character of the religious beliefs that grow up and become established among them. Racial and tribal and national characteristics, once formed, are real and persistent causes of divergent forms of religious belief. The social medium, too, has an immense influence on belief. Belief is a highly contagious thing.

In certain states of society, in certain dispositions of the mind of a community, it spreads with very little aid from reason, spreads almost entirely through fellow-feeling, sympathy, emotional excitement, example, imitation, fashion. And authority is another important factor in producing belief. Millions, both outside of and within Christendom, believe, not because they have grasped the truth of what they accept as divine verities, but because they think

that which they believe to be taught as truth by competent authority. Religious belief, too, is strongly affected by the feelings and emotions and desires. The passions and prejudices of men stimulate imagination, and so act on the judgment as to contribute to the formation of men's religious conceptions and convictions. And individual experiences and historical events, uncritically accepted, without due sifting and examination, may contribute to form or confirm religious beliefs which have no warrant in sound reason.

But the main cause of false or erroneous religious belief among men in response to God's self-revelation in nature and history and conscience is to be found in the blinding of men's minds and the corruption of their hearts, and the perversion of their wills through sin. This is the cause to which St. Paul traces the false religious beliefs and idolatries that have arisen among men in face of God's self-revelation in nature and history. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of

the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.”<sup>1</sup>

Want of purity of heart and honesty of mind and goodness or selflessness of will on man's part is the most prolific cause of erroneous and mischievous religious beliefs or superstitions. Central light is what men need above all else to dispel their circumferential darkness.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”<sup>2</sup>

He that has light within his own dear breast  
May sit in the centre and enjoy bright day ;  
But he that hides a dark soul and foul thoughts  
Benighted walks under the midday beam :  
Himself is his own dungeon.

“This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”<sup>3</sup>

The fact that false religious beliefs or superstitions are so widely prevalent among men has been adduced by some as a proof that all religious belief is equally untrustworthy and fallacious. But this is a most unwarrantable inference. The prevalence

<sup>1</sup> Rom. i. 21-23.    <sup>2</sup> Matt. v. 8.    <sup>3</sup> John iii. 19.



of so much false belief can be naturally and easily accounted for by the action of causes of belief which are not true or proper reasons for belief.

But the fact that religious belief sometimes arises from such causes, which are not true or proper reasons for it, does not invalidate the true reasons for belief which remain as its most powerful and persistent and only legitimate causes. It is because they are mistaken for true reasons that these spurious reasons act as causes of belief. Once they are clearly seen to be spurious and insufficient, they cease to give rise to or support belief. The lesson to be learned, therefore, from the prevalence of so much credulity or false belief in the world is not one of cynical scepticism or unreasonable disbelief, but rather one as to the need for care or caution in the formation of our religious beliefs, the need for sifting the evidence, and seeing to it that our faith is grounded on true and sufficient reasons, and not due to figments of the imagination, or other causes which cannot stand examination.

IV. Christian faith or belief is a particular form of religious belief—the highest and purest form. It is the reasonable, voluntary response of the human soul in



intellectual assent and moral surrender to the self-revelation of God given in the fact of Christ—the supreme fact of human history—with all that that fact implies, including the preparation for it in the unique and remarkable history and experience of the people of Israel, and the result flowing from it in the preaching of the apostles and the life-history of the Christian Church.

Christian faith is not essentially different in kind from true and reasonable human faith in general, which is the foundation of all rational human life and conduct.

The faith in one living and true God attained to by inspired Hebrew prophets like Amos and Isaiah, and by pious Greek philosophers like Socrates and Plato, in response to His self-revelation in nature and history and conscience, is not essentially different in kind from the confident faith of the man of science in the intelligibility of the world, the uniformity of nature, the objective truth obtainable by the right exercise of his faculties of perception and cognition. It is but a higher and fuller application and exercise of the same faith-faculty which lies at the root of all rational human life and conduct.

So, too, the faith of the Christian in the

Lord Jesus Christ as the perfect revealer of God to men and the reconciler of sinful men with God, is not essentially different in kind from the faith of the Hebrew prophet and the Greek philosopher in one living and true God. It is but a higher and fuller application and exercise of the same faith-faculty in response to God's self-revelation in history and experience.

For the fact of Christ is part of God's self-revelation in history—the keystone and completion of that revelation, which lightens up all that went before and explains and accounts for what follows after. The fact of Christ is the key to human history which opens up its importance and significance and lets us see God in it all. And the right response of the human soul to this fact is the crowning exercise of that reasonable faith, which is true wisdom, the foundation of all rational life and conduct.

The Christian appeal for faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is not an appeal to our emotions merely or mainly. It is not an appeal to “only believe,” whether we see or understand the reason for believing or not. It is an appeal to our whole nature or personality—to our reason and will and conscience not less than to our heart.

“In the eighteenth century,” says Professor Stalker, “faith was understood to be the habit of taking on credit dogmas which the mind could not understand, and this submission to the authority of the Bible or the Church was supposed to be exceedingly meritorious. But anything more unlike faith, as it is represented in the Bible, or as it has prevailed in the heroic periods of religion, it would be difficult to conceive.

“If in the mind of the reader there still linger any remains of the notion that faith is a shutting of the eyes of reason, and a blind trusting to authority, I advise you to sweep such rubbish out of your thoughts. Religion wants to shut no man’s eyes ; its mission is to open them.”<sup>1</sup>

Christian faith ought to rest on, and be able to adduce for itself, adequate evidence, evidence such as approves itself good and sufficient to the reasonable mind. And this it claims to do. The character and words and works of Jesus Christ are known to us from the testimony of those who were His companions during His sojourn here on earth. Their testimony and record of His words and works are sufficient to convince

<sup>1</sup> Stalker, “The Seven Cardinal Virtues,” p. 79.

us that in Christ Jesus the unique history of a remarkable people among the nations of the earth—the people of Israel—reaches its consummation ; and the self-revelation of God contained in that history reaches its completion and fulfilment.

And when to this testimony recorded in the New Testament we add the life-history of the Christian Church, which has resulted from Christ's appearance in this world, the accumulated experience of successive generations of Christian believers as to the power of the Christian faith to meet the deepest needs of the human soul, to purify and elevate and ennoble human life, and promote human welfare ; and still more if we can point to our own personal experience of the Gospel's power to meet the needs of reason and conscience, and satisfy the aspirations of the heart, and bring peace and joy into the life, we have a body of evidence sufficient on which to base a reasonable faith that in the fact of Christ we have God's fullest, highest, clearest revelation of Himself to mankind.

The grounds or reasons for giving the response of faith in intellectual assent and moral surrender to Christ and His claims have been occupying us in the preceding

lectures. What I wish to do now is to point out the implicates and consequences of true Christian faith ; to show its function as contributing to the salvation of those who exercise it, and to deal with some points as to its origin in individuals, and its maintenance or continuance, which have occasioned difficulty or perplexity to some minds.

V. A true believing response to Christ and His claims implies that we yield the assent of our minds and the surrender of our hearts and wills to Him in the three-fold office or function which He claims to exercise as the perfect Prophet, perfect Priest, and perfect King of men.

The significance of these three offices or functions we endeavoured to explain in the last lecture.

(1) Acceptance of Christ as our perfect Prophet means that we accept and bow to His authority as revealer of God's character and purpose, as final and conclusive for us.

No higher or greater or truer prophet of religious truth can for us appear than Jesus Christ. This is because He is, as we believe, the Logos or Word of God, incarnated in an individual human personality, with a



view to becoming realised in fulness of time in a perfected human society—the Church, which is His body. During His life on earth His disciples learned to look to Christ as an absolute religious authority. “Lord, to whom shall we go?” they said: “Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and do know that Thou art the Holy One of God.”<sup>1</sup>

The Christ, however, to Whom we look as our Prophet, is no mere historic figure of the past, no mere static authority that once appeared on earth, but a living Christ, the ever-living, ever-active Word of God, Who, by His living Spirit, to-day active and energising in the minds and hearts of His believing people, continues the prophetic work which He exercised while here on earth.

And in yielding to His authority as our Prophet we are not yielding to a mere external authority like that of a Church or a book, or yielding up the rights of our reason. We are yielding to the authority of the Logos or Word of God, Who is within us as well as without us, the root-principle and revealer of truth in the universe, the root-principle of our own reason, that faculty

<sup>1</sup> John vi. 68, 69,



in us which apprehends and responds to the truth in reasonable faith.

It is in virtue of His being the Logos incarnate, the root-principle and source of all truth, the "Light of every man that cometh into the world," that Christ can be to us an authority to Whom we can look up and submit without surrendering the rights of that inner light, that light of true reason which is the Spirit of God in us. The Spirit of God in Christ, the incarnate Logos, bears witness together with our spirit—our deepest, truest self—to the truth. Our acceptance of Christ's authority is thus consonant with a recognition of a seat of authority also in our own souls, viz. the Spirit of God in us as in Christ, the Light of all our seeing.

The acceptance of Christ as our authority is thus no encouragement to a blind acquiescence in unassimilated dogmas imposed on us from without, but rather a constant stimulus to the exercise of a sane and sanctified reason in seeking to understand and assimilate and appreciate more fully the "truth as it is in Jesus." Such exercise will lead us to see that His word and promises, so far as they can be tested by us in this mortal life, are indeed words of eternal life,

which will give us confidence in resting and relying on them when they refer to matters beyond our ken or power of testing.

(2) Believing acceptance of Christ as our perfect Priest, able to remove all barriers raised by sin between us and God and effect true reconciliation, will serve not only to bring us assurance of forgiveness, but also bring us into sympathy with God's condemning attitude towards our sin, and so become the death of sin in us.

This is the influence of the Cross of Christ on the believing heart. It is God's condemnation of our sin made visible and impressive in the sufferings and death of our representative Head and Sin-bearer. The members of the body come, through sympathetic and appropriating faith, to reckon the death of their Head under sin's condemnation as their death unto sin, the crucifixion of the sinful flesh in them. They are moved to penitence, to hatred and condemnation of their sin, through the manifestation of God's condemnation of it in the person of Him Who, though sinless, was by His own loving, voluntary act the Sin-bearer for His brethren. The use to be made of the Cross of Christ by Christian faith in this connection is indicated by the apostle who entered most

fully into its meaning, in such words as these, "I am crucified with Christ."<sup>1</sup> "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of Christ, whereby the world is crucified unto me and I unto the world."<sup>2</sup> "Our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."<sup>3</sup> "Reckon ye yourselves also to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."<sup>4</sup>

The death of Christ on the cross as Sin-bearer of humanity is thus fitted, not only to satisfy the claims of divine justice or the need for divine self-expression in reference to human sin, but also to exercise a profound moral influence on sinners who believe and appropriate this sacrifice, leading them to penitence, to acquiescence in the divine condemnation of sin, and so becoming the destruction of the body of sin in them. This is no small part of the function of the cross in removing obstacles and bringing about the reconciliation of sinful men with God.

Its juridical effect as regards satisfying the claims of law or justice cannot be

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Gal. vi. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Rom. vi. 6.

<sup>4</sup> Rom. vi. 11.

separated from its moral effect in producing penitence and destroying the body of sin in those who, through faith, become one with the crucified Redeemer.

(3) Again, believing acceptance of Christ as our King means that we subject our own lives to the principles of His kingly rule—the sovereign power of self-sacrificing love—and, further, that we seek to make these operative in the organising of society on this earth. To pray and strive that God's Kingdom may come, and His righteous, loving will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven, is part of the task set by faith to the Christian believer.

Yet though Christian faith bids us thus pray and labour for the realisation of God's Kingdom on this earth, through the organisation of men and nations under the principle of righteous love, with Christ as acknowledged King and His Spirit permeating all, it does not limit our outlook to this present world, but teaches us to look with confidence for a perfect realisation of the Christian ideal in a world to come, in whose joys and glories we as individuals shall yet be permitted to share.

Thus it will be seen that true faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is no empty, barren

thing, but a powerful dynamic influence, a channel through which God's grace manifested in Christ reaches the minds and hearts of men with saving, sanctifying influences of the richest kind.

In its fullest exercise and highest reach it leads to such a union or identification of the believer with Christ that he can say: "I am crucified with Christ, and no longer live I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God Who loved me and gave Himself for me."<sup>1</sup> Through this union with Christ, effected by a living Christian faith, there is brought about a union with God the Father also, and a fulfilment of the Lord's prayer "that they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us."<sup>2</sup>

We see then how faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the condition on man's side of appropriating and realising in experience the Christian salvation, as being the channel through which saving influences of the strongest kind reach and become operative in the human soul. Salvation by grace through faith is no mere legal trans-

<sup>1</sup> Gal. ii. 20.

<sup>2</sup> John xvii. 21.



actional salvation effected outside of us by Christ's satisfaction of divine justice for us, by means of His obedient life and atoning, sacrificial death. It is an intensely ethical salvation, accomplished in and upon us through our union with Christ, and the influences of His quickening, life-giving Spirit upon and within us. Sin is not merely cancelled or covered or compensated for by an external legal transaction, but ethically destroyed and cleared away by the dynamic moral power of Christ's redemptive work in the souls of those who through faith become one with Him.

VI. And now what as to the genesis of this saving faith in the soul, and its continuance or maintenance in face of temptations to unbelief or doubt?

What is to be said as to the relation of divine grace, or the work of the Holy Spirit, and human free-will in this matter? Is faith a work of God's Spirit in us, or is it an act of human free-will, for the presence or absence of which the individual is responsible? This is a question which has occasioned perplexity to not a few, and given rise to much controversy among Christian thinkers from the time of Pelagius and Augustine onwards.



The statements of Scripture bearing on the matter are of two kinds.

On the one hand we have a number of passages in which salvation, in all its parts and processes, is referred entirely to God, Who, in the Old Testament, is represented as bestowing the gift of the new heart,<sup>1</sup> and in the New Testament is represented as bestowing the gifts of repentance and faith,<sup>2</sup> and as "working in us" in the life of sanctification, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure."<sup>3</sup>

This attribution of all in us that is good, or makes for salvation, to the working of God's Spirit in us, and not to any virtue or merit of our own, is attested and confirmed by the religious consciousness or experience of the humble and reverent believer. He is conscious of depending on God's Spirit for all that is good in him, and all movements towards the good. "He drew me, and I followed on," is what he feels conscious of in the matter. "To God, and God alone, be the glory for any good there is in me."

<sup>1</sup> Isa. xli. 10 ; Jer. xxiv. 7 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

<sup>2</sup> Acts v. 31, xi. 18 ; 2 Tim. ii. 25 ; Eph. ii. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Philip. ii. 13.

For every virtue we possess,  
And every victory won,  
And every thought of holiness,  
Are His alone.

This is profoundly true to Christian experience, and of supreme importance for preserving Christian humility and sense of dependence on God for all good, and for preventing self-righteousness and self-sufficiency from springing up in the soul. Augustine and Calvin do full justice to this side of the truth in their treatment of the genesis and continuance of faith.

But there are other passages of Scripture in which repentance and faith, the human conditions of salvation, are represented as acts of the individual soul, endowed with free-will, for the exercise or non-exercise of which acts the individual, and not God, is responsible.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the whole meaning of preaching the Gospel and urging sinners to "repent and believe" and close with God's offered grace in Christ implies that the free-will of individuals is an element to be reckoned with in the matter, which cannot be left out of account or ignored as a factor in deciding issues.

No doubt God's prevenient grace in

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17, vi. 33, xi. 28, etc.

providence, and the inward enlightening and persuading and drawing of the Holy Spirit, are necessary factors in explaining the genesis of faith, so that the individual, when he yields to these gracious influences, brought to bear on him by God, and attains to a true and steadfast faith, says truly, "It was God that effected it in me; His Spirit drew me, and I followed; I simply ceased resisting God's Spirit, and allowed myself to be *drawn* and *moulded* by Him into what I now am, so that I have no merit or credit for it." True! but what of him who does not yield, but continues to resist the drawings of God's Spirit? This is the tragedy of the whole matter, that the individual, though the subject of God's prevenient grace, and the subject, too, of the drawings of God's Spirit striving within him, may yet resist and persist in his resistance to these drawings and motions of the Holy Spirit. And in this case saving faith is not achieved or attained to.

Who is responsible for this non-attainment of faith on the part of those who, notwithstanding the enlightening influences of God's grace and the inward drawings of His Spirit brought to bear on them,

continue to resist the Spirit and remain in unbelief and opposition to the truth? Is it God? Certainly not.<sup>1</sup> The *individual* alone, with his mysterious and inexplicable power of free-will, is responsible for yielding to or continuing to resist the strivings of God's Spirit, Who desires and seeks the salvation of all.

The mysterious power of free-will, where-with every morally responsible agent is endowed, enables him either to yield to the influences of God's grace and the drawings of God's Spirit,—in which case, through the workings of God's Spirit within him, he attains to faith, to correspondence to his environment, which is God's will, and to ultimate salvation or eternal life,—or, on the other hand, to resist God and continue in opposition and defiance to God's will. In the latter case he does not attain to faith, or to correspondence with his environment, but becomes bruised and crushed and destroyed under the action of that holy will, and that infrangible moral order, which he vainly seeks to defy.

This is the tragedy of human life, and it is a real tragedy—a tragedy which we

<sup>1</sup> When the individual yields to grace he is "led by the Spirit," but not if he resists.

see happening around us every day. "Our God is a consuming fire," and is seen to be so by those who have spiritual insight into the experiences of this present life. And this has been projected by prophetic insight into the future also. "Hell," says Principal G. A. Smith,"<sup>1</sup> "has borrowed her glare from the imagination of men aflame with the real fieriness of this life . . .; it was not hell that created conscience: it was conscience that created hell, and conscience was fired by the vision which fired Isaiah—of all life aglow with the righteousness of God, 'God with us' as He was with Jerusalem, a spirit of justice and a spirit of burning."

If it be asked, "Why do some individuals yield to the drawings of God's Spirit, so attaining to saving faith, while others do not yield to the same drawings, but remain in resistance and unbelief?" the only answer we can give is, because they will have it so. When we get back to the active, self-determining will in individuals as a *cause of decisions*, resulting in practical issues, we get to an ultimate cause behind which we cannot penetrate. To attempt to trace the matter back, with Augustine and Calvin,

<sup>1</sup> Smith, "Isaiah," Vol. I. p. 338.



to *God* and His particular and unconditional predestination—by saying that in the one case God brought His grace to bear on the mind and heart and will of the individual in an *overpowering* and *irresistible* way, while in the other case He *did* not do so, but, “out of His mere good pleasure,” brought grace to bear in a way that was *resistible*, or passed the sinner by altogether without any attempt to win or draw him—is manifestly unsatisfactory, and leads to unworthy thoughts of God, Who “hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked,” but rather “willeth that all men should be saved.”<sup>1</sup>

Necessitarianism or Determinism, under whatever disguise it is veiled, cuts away the ground of moral responsibility and annuls the ethical character of man’s life in this world.<sup>2</sup>

It is sometimes supposed that we can escape from the difficulties of a philosophical determinism by ridding our minds of the idea that God moves and determines the wills of finite individual spirits by any mere

<sup>1</sup> Ezek. xxxiii. 11 ; 1 Tim. ii. 4.

<sup>2</sup> On the relation of divine grace and human free-will in the appropriation of redemption, see further, Note H in Appendix.



*mechanical* means acting on them from without, like the forces operative in the material world. God, it is said, moves and determines human spirits by spiritual means acting from within—the enlightening influences of His grace, the drawing, persuasive influences of His Spirit, which are determining influences consonant with the character of wills as such. But this is merely to cloud and confuse the issue. The question is not by what kind of means, whether mechanical or spiritual, God determines the wills of finite individual spirits, but whether God determines these wills at all. To say that God *determines* the wills of finite individual spirits in a way consonant with the *freedom* of these wills is a contradiction in terms. For the freedom of these individual wills just means that they are self-determined, which implies that they are not God-determined, unless, indeed, God and the finite selves of individuals are one and the same reality, which lands us in Pantheism. While finite, self-conscious individual spirits, in some deep and profound way, live and move and have their being in God, yet this must be compatible with their having an independent power of self-determination which is not direct determination by God's will,

otherwise human freedom and moral responsibility are taken away, and the ethical and probationary character of human life undermined and destroyed.

Another common confusion, frequently found in the treatment of this subject of human freedom, is the confusion of that *moral freedom* attained to when men voluntarily yield themselves to the will of God and allow themselves to be determined thereby, thus reaching correspondence with their environment and true self-realisation in filial union with God, with that *antecedent power of free choice* which is the necessary precondition of attaining to this true moral freedom, but which may also issue in the choice of wrong, of opposition to God's will, and persistent continuance therein, unto ultimate perdition. It is this power of free choice, which precedes and conditions the attainment of true moral freedom, that constitutes man a responsible moral agent and opens up the possibility of divergent issues to his life-career. And this power of free choice between right and wrong, undetermined by any agency except that of the finite spirit itself, is what is sometimes denied and decried as a mere unmotivated "liberty of indifference" or caprice

without moral significance, by determinists of various types. Yet this so-called "liberty of indifference," or undetermined power of moral choice between right and wrong belonging to individual finite spirits, is really the crux of the whole matter. The will of the finite individual spirit, in the choice made between right and wrong, truth and falsehood, self-surrender to God and self-willed resistance to God, is ultimately determined by no other agency than that of the finite spirit itself. This is what constitutes the mystery of individual personality, and leads to the development of different characters and different life-issues. Of course the individual spirit who chooses wrong and seeks defiantly to resist God's will and realise something other than God's will in God's world sets himself a vain and futile task. He is kicking against the pricks, and can only hurt himself. He may turn ere it be too late, as Saul did, and become through divine grace a potent agent of God's will in the world. But he may also persist, to his own ultimate undoing and perdition. This is what gives to human life its seriousness and responsibility.

This gift of freedom of will to men is a dangerous gift. But it is a gift which, with

all its risks, had to be bestowed if God's purpose to realise a kingdom of willingly obedient and loving moral children sharing in His life and blessedness was to be effected. And God's purpose will not fail of accomplishment, even though some whom He made and meant to be His loving and obedient and happy children may fail, through their own perverse misuse of the will-power He has given them, to reach their true predestination of sonship in and through Christ Jesus the incarnate Son, Who yearns over all men and seeks their good and is able to "save to the uttermost all who come unto God by Him." <sup>1</sup>

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This, in briefest form, is the essence of the gospel message to all sinful men.

It is an appeal to our whole nature, to our mind and heart, to our conscience and will. And each of us is responsible before God for the answer he is giving to that appeal. Look to Him and trust in Him, simply, yet whole-heartedly and without reserve, as your Prophet, to teach you the truth concerning God and spiritual things; as your Priest, to make atonement for you and make

<sup>1</sup> Heb. vii. 25,

you right with God ; as your King, to Whom you look up with love and loyalty and trust as able to protect and defend you from all enemies and to make you sharers at last in the glories and blessings of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Christian faith is attained to by individuals in various ways and under various circumstances, so that no one man's experience of its genesis in his own soul can be taken as a pattern to which others must conform. The word of God, revealed in Scripture and proclaimed by the Christian Church ; the inward working of the Holy Spirit, Who strives with all men, enlightening our minds and moving our hearts and drawing us towards the truth : these are powerful and gracious influences contributing towards the production of faith in the soul. But such faith cannot arise without the response of the individual will to the evidence of the truth and the drawings of the Spirit towards the right.

Shall we yield to the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, drawing us towards truth and right, towards God and His Christ, Whose strivings with our soul are matters of experience to us all ? Or shall we resist these strivings, and resolve to make self,



not Christ, self-will and pleasure, not God's will and duty our choice in life ?

This is the supreme question of practical importance for every human soul. On the answer we give to it, not in intellectual assent merely, but in that moral self-surrender which is the moving spring of the practical life, the issues of life for us depend.

"Be not faithless, but believing," and that not with a timorous, halting, hesitating, half-ashamed faith which is mainly traditional and does not know its ground, but with a reasonable, sober, steadfast faith which, if it lays hold of truth slowly and deliberately, does so firmly and surely, so that it is not easily shaken. A reasonable, well-grounded Christian faith is the best possession any young man can have to face the world with, and enable him to overcome its temptations and trials and difficulties.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 1 John v. 4.





## APPENDIX



## NOTE A

### CONCERNING REVELATION AND THE INSPIRATION AND AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

AT one of the lectures a student asked a question as to the lecturer's attitude in regard to the inspiration and authority of the Bible. This note is intended to serve as an answer to that question.

It is necessary, to begin with, to have a clear understanding as to terms, and in particular as to the sense in which the terms "revelation" and "inspiration" are understood.

I. According to the writer's view, "revelation" is the wider conception, and includes "inspiration" as an element or aspect of it.

Revelation has two sides or aspects—an "objective" and a "subjective." On its "objective" side it is the self-manifestation of God in the facts of nature, the events of history, and the objective experience of individuals through the impact of God upon them. On its "subjective" side it is the internal illumination of individual souls, whereby they are enabled to understand and express in language the self-manifestation of God in nature and history and personal experience. This is inspiration. Without its internal illumination the objective self-manifestation of God in nature and history would be blind or unintelligible,

just as without the objective manifestation in fact and event "inspiration" would be contentless. Both sides together—the objective self-manifestation and the internal enlightenment—constitute divine revelation. When "revelation" is spoken of nowadays, it is generally the objective side of it—the self-manifestation of God in outward fact or event or experience—on which the stress is laid, the "subjective" side being referred to under the term "inspiration."

But the subjective illumination which enables the individual soul to understand and interpret the manifestation is a part or element of divine revelation not less than the outward facts through which the manifestation is given. This "inspiration" may vary in quality or degree, but some measure of it is necessary ere facts of nature or history or personal experience can become for us a true revelation or vehicle for conveying to us knowledge of God's character and mind and will.

As regards the objective self-manifestation of God, which is the primary element in revelation, we distinguish between a general self-manifestation given by God to all men alike in nature and general providence, and a special manifestation, which we believe has been given in the fact of Christ, with all that is included in that fact. God's self-manifestation in nature and history and personal experience, interpreted in the light of such measure of spiritual illumination or enlightenment as they possessed, lies at the root of all "ethnic" religions which claim more or less confidently to base their knowledge of the divine power or powers worshipped on "divine revelation" of some sort.

The distinction of the Christian religion in this

respect is, not that it claims to be based on revelation while others are not, but that it claims to be based on the highest and richest and fullest manifestation of Himself which God has given in human history—viz. His self-revelation in Christ—and a special measure of illumination or inspiration bestowed on individuals who were in contact with Jesus Christ during His earthly life, enabling them to understand and express the meaning of this highest self-manifestation of God.

Even the ethnic religions are not without elements of revelation, both objective and subjective. The feeling of dependence, and the indications of transitoriness in the visible world around, awaken in us presentiments as to a Higher Power as a permanent, efficient, originating cause on which we and all things depend ; and the law and order and purposefulness and beauty of nature, which render the natural world cognisable for man and make it accessible for his purposeful action in widest range, fill the soul with the presentiment of a creative intelligence behind all. Further, the rudiments of conscience and of religious longing in mankind generally, taken in connection with the evident moral order of the world, which visits with destruction all contempt for moral good and the laws leading to its realisation, and so impels men to righteous living and seemly social organisation, awaken presentiments as to a power not ourselves, making for righteousness in the world's history.

These general indications of the presence and working of God, in nature, history and experience, which furnish the material for the so-called proofs for the being of God—cosmological, teleological, ontological, moral—constitute a revelation of a general kind, on



the basis of which, according to their varied experiences and powers of reflection and generalisation, men and nations have built up their varied religious beliefs.

It is the distinctive claim of Christianity that these general and vague indications of God's presence and working in the world reach a consummation and find their true interpretation in the special historical revelation God has given to men of His nature and will in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The fact of Christ—including His spiritual personality and His redeeming influence, with its roots in the preceding history of Israel and its fruits in apostolic experience—is the central manifestation of God on which Christian faith is grounded. From this, as central, all other manifestations of God, whether in nature, in history, or in personal experience, become intelligible and interpretable.

The fact of Christ, as an historical fact, had its roots in the past in the history of the people of Israel, of whom, as concerning the flesh, He came, and on whose history and religious experience His own spiritual life as a man was nourished.

The manifestation of divine power and guidance in the history of the Israelitish people and the special inward illumination of prophetic men among that people, enabling them to understand and give expression to this manifestation, form the basis on which the religion of Israel was grounded. Through historical leadings and prophetic men God planted in this people a knowledge of His moral character and will. He thereby awakened in them an earnest self-judgment and deep sense of sin, which placed the removal of sin and moral renewal in the forefront of their religious longing,

and which finds no parallel in other pre-Christian religions.

The conclusive divine deed of redemption—the coming of the Messiah—remains in the Old Testament religion a subject of prophecy and hope. This, judged from the Christian standpoint, is the merit of the Old Testament religion, and furnishes a proof of the teleological connection of that religion and Christianity. In this close connection is grounded the right to regard the divine education of Israel as the preparatory stage of the Christian revelation, which mediates for all time the practical understanding of the Christian salvation.

Even the religions of heathen peoples—the ethnic religions—are not without teleological connection with God's self-manifestation in Christ, Who may be apprehended and interpreted as the Light of the World, the fulfiller of the desire of all nations.

But the elements of truth contained in the ethnic religions are too scattered and partial and sporadic to be set forth as a preparation or development, leading up directly to the Christian revelation, like the religion of Israel.

As the full significance of the fact of Christ for human salvation first comes to expression only in the religious experience of those who were in close contact with His historic manifestation here on earth, the earliest stage of the Church's history—the experience of apostolic times—has a distinct right to be reckoned as part of the full historic Christian revelation.

We learn of Christ, not simply from His own words and deeds, but through the transformation which faith in Him has wrought in the lives of His followers. The subsequent periods of the Church's history, wherein we

see the redeeming activity of Christ and the work of His Spirit continued among men, may also in a wide sense be included under Christian revelation. It is more accurate, however, to limit the period of fresh creative Christian revelation to such time as was necessary to make the full significance of God's historic manifestation of His saving grace in Christ clear to, and operative among, men. The subsequent experiences of the Christian Church furnish no new content to the essential Christian revelation. They are only the effectual unfolding of the one normative divine revelation in Christ and His Spirit.

II. Such being the nature of divine revelation in general and of the Christian revelation in particular, let us now proceed to consider the place and function of the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments in connection with this revelation.

We defined inspiration as being the subjective side of divine revelation—that inward spiritual illumination of prophetic men living in the stream of the historic self-manifestation of God, which enabled them to understand, appreciate, and express in language this manifestation of God that was being given.

Now, the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are just the highest products of this inspiration, and therefore constitute a part, and a very important part, of divine revelation.

As the self-manifestation of God which underlies the Christian religion consists essentially in the historic fact of Christ, with all that that includes, and as Holy Scripture is the historic testimony which brings us face to face with the person and work of Christ as grounded in and prepared for by Israel's history, and manifested in the experience and preaching of the

earliest community of Christian believers, the Bible is of supreme importance as an element in the Christian revelation. It is at once the chief source of our knowledge of the Christian revelation; the primary means of grace or mediating cause of the Christian experience of salvation; and the norm for judging of and testing Christian doctrine. Scripture is not to be forthwith identified with the Christian revelation, which is largely an objective self-manifestation of God in facts and events and experiences. But, as revelation includes the inward illumination of prophetic men so that they may understand, and give expression in language to, this objective manifestation of God, and as Holy Scripture is the result or product of this inward illumination, it has a right to be included within divine revelation as a part thereof.

The older Protestant conception of revelation identified it immediately with Holy Scripture, conceived of as a verbally inspired communication of divine truth. Revelation was regarded as in its essence a supernatural communication of divine teaching, whose authority was of an outward or statutory kind, based on the attestation of miracle and fulfilled predictions of future events.

But in later Protestant theology divine revelation has come to be conceived of in a wider way, as primarily the self-manifestation of God in facts of nature, history and personal experience, culminating in the supreme historic fact of Christ, with all its implicates, rather than as supernatural communication of inspired teaching concerning divine things.

The prophetic inspiration of individual men, out of which Scripture arose, is regarded as but a part, and even a subordinate, though by no means unessential part, of divine revelation. Further, the authority of

revelation is conceived of as inwardly grounded, attested by conscience or the witness of God's Spirit within us, rather than as of an outward or statutory kind.

"Inspiration" applies primarily to the writers of the books of the Bible, and secondarily to their writings. It implies that the writers were taken hold of in their whole personal life and penetrated in their literary activity by the Divine Spirit, Who was operative in the historic events and experiences constituting the "objective" revelation they were called upon to describe and estimate.

This implies, not indeed that their report and estimate of the facts, events and experiences dealt with is necessarily free from all scientific, historic or chronological imperfections or errors such as characterise human records, however honest and careful, but that it is a description and estimate, which may be relied on as adequate for its purpose, and sufficient to convey those spiritual lessons and that knowledge of God and His will which the facts or events were meant to teach. Writings thus inspired by the Spirit of God dwelling in and penetrating the souls of the writers may not necessarily be "inerrant" in all details of history or chronology or descriptions of scientific facts, while yet they are fitted to serve as a norm or standard, and to furnish an authoritative guide for men in regard to knowledge of God, His character, will and purpose. This is essentially what is meant by describing them as "inspired" writings. The "inspiration" of the writers who record the self-manifestation of God in history is itself a part of that progressive divine revelation given in history and experience. To commit ourselves beforehand to any theory as to what must be the characteristics of such inspired writings in regard to



historical accuracy or scientific knowledge is unwise. These characteristics can only be learned from a careful examination of the writings themselves.

The Christian revelation on which our faith rests is something wider and fuller than the Scriptures which record it, though these enter into it and form a part of it. Whatever features may be found to characterise them as human writings, though the writings of inspired prophetic men, these cannot really affect their place and function for Christian faith as the chief source of our knowledge of the Christian revelation, the primary means of grace, and the norm for judging of and testing Christian doctrine.

Those who have grasped aright the meaning of the Christian revelation as an historical reality, and of the relation of Holy Scripture thereto as the literary product of the spiritual illumination accompanying and forming part of that progressive divine revelation in history, will be able to regard with comparative equanimity the inquiries of historical and literary critics into the characteristics of these sacred writings; for they will be assured that no results will be accepted by the Christian Church which will destroy the normative authority of these Holy Scriptures as mediating to us our knowledge of the supreme fact of Christ, of Whose redeeming power the experience of His first disciples, the experience of the Christian Church during nineteen centuries, and our own personal experience as believers makes us sure.

Some Reformed theologians, because of the importance they attached to the Bible rather than to the Church as seat of religious authority, were inclined to make the highest claims for "inspiration" as guaranteeing absolute inerrancy in all respects. The Bible was conceived of as an inspired communication to men of know-



ledge on all sorts of subjects, scientific and historical, as well as religious. The conception entertained of inspiration during the scholastic period of reformed theology was that of dictation by the Holy Spirit, in which the human writers were but passive instruments. This gave to the writings produced under the influence of inspiration the character of absolute inerrancy in every respect, for the Holy Spirit was regarded as directly responsible for every thought and word contained in these writings.

This view, which has been widely prevalent in the Christian Church, is regarded by most theologians of the present day as not in harmony either with the testimony of the authors themselves as to the impulse under which they wrote, and the methods adopted by them in composing their writings, or with the ascertained characteristics of the writings viewed in the light of modern natural science, historical criticism, and archæology.

Careful examination into the actual characteristics of the sacred writings shows that whatever may have been the influence of inspiration on the sacred writers, it did not destroy their individuality as human persons, nor did it exempt them, in writing history, from the need of gathering their historical material in the ordinary way from ancient documents and traditions, as well as from personal observation or experience. On the one hand, examination of the writings gives us glimpses into the individual personality and peculiarities of the different authors as regards literary style and general outlook, and indisputable evidences of individual personal experience, of manifold human striving and personal effort to reach the solution of the highest problems, and of the impulses and methods guiding them in their

compositions, which do not harmonise with the idea of the dictation of the contents of Scripture, from above, for which in every detail the Holy Spirit is directly responsible. And, on the other hand, such examination reveals a popular standpoint on the part of the authors in regard to matters of science, discrepancies in historical and chronological matters, and inaccuracies or inexactitudes in quotation, which, while characteristic of human writings of the highest order, do not fit in with any "dictation" theory of the origin of the Scriptures that does not make full allowance for the human element as entering into these writings.<sup>1</sup>

Even such conservative defenders of the inspiration of the Bible as Drs. Hodge and Warfield, say of the Scriptures: "It is not claimed that the Scriptures, any more than their authors, are omniscient. The information they convey is in the forms of human thought, and limited on all sides. They were not designed to teach philosophy, science or human history, as such. They were not designed to furnish an infallible system of speculative theology. They are written in human languages, whose words, inflections, constructions, and idioms bear everywhere indelible traces of human error. The record itself furnishes evidence that the writers were in large measure dependent for their knowledge upon sources and methods in themselves fallible, and that their personal knowledge and judgments were in many matters hesitating and defective, or even wrong."<sup>2</sup>

If so much is admitted in regard to the human element entering into the inspired Scriptures, it seems unnecessary to contend that these, while fitted to lead

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dods, "The Bible, Its Origin and Nature," pp. 135-145.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Orr, "Revelation and Inspiration," p. 315, from Hodge and Warfield on "Inspiration," p. 256.

us to a true knowledge of God and His self-manifestation in history, must also be inerrant in their references to matters of science, or to historical or chronological details for which the writers were dependent on sources that were not infallible. The value of their writings as mere history or information as to past events must be estimated by standards similar to those applied in estimating historic writings generally ; while the scientific information given, or supposed to be given, by the sacred writers, is a reflection of the popular scientific standpoint of their time, and must not be made use of to hinder or restrain the inquiries of modern science as though it authoritatively settled these matters. The unwisdom of using the Bible as an authority on matters of science has become increasingly clear since the days when Galileo was imprisoned by the ecclesiastical authorities for affirming that it was the earth, not the sun, that moved.

As a reaction against the high view of Biblical inspiration implying absolute inerrancy in all respects, some have been led to an opposite negative extreme, according to which the Bible is just like any other collection of ancient human writings, a mere human record of events and experiences and beliefs, more or less trustworthy and valuable, but having no quality which distinguishes it from other similar human writings or which gives it of right the character of an authoritative standard or guide in religious matters.

This view ignores altogether the actual self-revelation of God in the events of history and experience with which the Bible deals ; and also the special enlightenment or inspiration granted to prophetic men, enabling them to describe and estimate and interpret these significant events and experiences amid which they lived, and so

making their writings a part of the revelation that was being given. It is altogether too low a view of the value and authority of the Bible to harmonise with any true conception of a special self-manifestation actually given by God to men through the events and experiences of actual history.

According to the writer's view, the Scriptures, alike of the Old and New Testaments, acquire their peculiar characteristics and authoritative worth from the actual self-manifestation of God in history with which they are concerned, and from the spiritual impulse and illumination, forming part of divine revelation, in which they have originated.

As already stated, the centre and substance of the Christian revelation on which the Christian religion is based is the fact of Christ, which has its middle point in His personality as He appeared on earth, but which was prepared for in previous history, and has been unfolded in the experiences of His believing disciples. Christ Himself, Whose redeeming influence is experienced in the believer's soul, is ultimately and primarily the Word of God to us, to which belong those qualities of authority, sufficiency, efficacy, etc., attributable to the Word of the Living God.

The Scriptures of the New Testament acquire their unique worth and authoritative value for us because, springing as they do from the spiritual impulse coming from Christ, they make accessible to us, in its original power and fulness, the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, which finds us and awakens in us faith in Him. So, too, the Old Testament has its worth and value for us, because, through its mediation, the preparatory revelation of God in Israel is made accessible to us and exercises still to-day on Christians and in Christianity its



pedagogic function as the schoolmaster that leads us to Christ.

As Christ Jesus is ultimately and primarily God's Word to us—His self-manifestation meeting and satisfying our religious need, and bringing us salvation—every witness becomes, in a true way, God's Word to us, which brings nigh and makes known to us God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ.

And the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are God's Word to us, and have attributed to them the qualities of that Word, inasmuch as they mediate to us and make accessible to us that revelation of God in Christ, that Gospel which meets our needs and proves to be the power of God unto salvation.

Because, then, the Scriptures mediate and make accessible to us the fact of God's self-revelation, culminating in Christ, in such a way as gives understanding of Him to faith, and meets and satisfies our religious need, we regard them as the inspired Word of God. Our full persuasion of their inspiration and normative worth is derived from the testimony of the Holy Spirit within our own souls, not from anything external imposing them upon us from without as an external or statutory authority.

As regards the New Testament writings, the judgment of Christian faith affirms them to be inspired and authoritative, not only because of their central theme, viz. God's self-revelation in Christ, but also because of the spiritual impulse in which they have originated. The Spirit of Christ, the Divine Spirit, has, as we believe, taken hold of the New Testament witnesses in their whole personal life, including their literary activity as writers, and has enabled them to present and interpret the historic facts amid which

they lived in such a way as to show God's purpose in and through these facts.

Similarly, as regards the Old Testament writings, the judgment of faith affirms them to be directly or indirectly a work of the Spirit of God, operative in Old Testament prophecy and in the guidance of the people, and, as such, of unique value for mediating to us a knowledge of God's progressive self-revelation.

Within these limits Christian faith can with equanimity leave it to literary and historical criticism to discover what it can as to the origin and characteristics of these sacred writings, assured that no results of a sound and reverent criticism will ever dethrone the Bible from its place of central and supreme importance as mediating God's self-revelation to the children of men.

The dogmatic estimate of Scripture as furnishing the supreme standard or norm of faith and duty is guided ultimately by the consideration that Jesus Christ, in His saving significance, is the centre of divine revelation, and all Scripture which is to have worth and regulative authority for us as Christians must be capable of being brought into relation to, and harmonised with, this supreme and central fact of Christ, which is self-authenticating through the inward testimony of the Holy Spirit in our souls. All Scripture given by inspiration of God comes to acquire constraining authority for us Christians as God's Word when it is seen to be related to this essential revelation in Christ, as serving to prepare for, point up to, elucidate or illustrate it in its saving significance and power.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two useful recent books on Revelation and Inspiration are those of Professors Orr and Reinhold Seeberg.



## NOTE B

### ON ABSOLUTE IDEALISM AS A PHILOSOPHICAL THEORY

ABSOLUTE IDEALISM, as represented by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, and the British Neo-Hegelians (T. H. Green, John and Edward Caird, Henry Jones, etc.), may be regarded as an attempt to formulate a metaphysic such as may serve to give adequate intellectual expression to the truth underlying the following judgments of the Christian consciousness, viz. :

(1) That God, the ultimate reality, is not merely *one*, but *triune*—Father, Son, and Spirit, one God ;

(2) That in God we, as finite spirits, “live, and move, and have our being” ;

(3) That Jesus Christ, the Perfect Man, is “God manifest in the flesh” ;

(4) That for the true Christian, “to live is Christ” ; as St. Paul says : “I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

1. The *logical* foundation of the “idealistic metaphysic” is that which Hegel has striven to set forth in his exposition of logic, or the laws of thought, in contrast to the Aristotelian logic, with its laws of “identity” and “contradiction” and “excluded middle,” under which, it is alleged, all conceptions of real existence must be formed. According to the Aristotelian logic, it would seem to be impossible to form a valid rational

conception of God as "one," and at the same time "three." The laws of identity and contradiction would seem to forbid the formation of such a conception. But according to Hegel, "triunity," so far from being an irrational conception, is the proper form of thought under which to grasp reality. The "real" in every sphere is found on reflection to be the synthesis of two apparent opposites. The Aristotelian logic, with its hard opposites which cannot be grasped as a unity, is the logic of the "mere understanding," which can never enable us to grasp the ultimate reality as a unity. But Hegel seeks to furnish a higher and more adequate logic—the logic of the "speculative reason"—which reveals the notion or idea in its true form as a triplicity, not an abstract unity or self-identity. Hence, that God, the ultimate reality, should be conceived of as Father and Son—eternal subject or generator, and eternal object or generated—brought to unity through the operation of the Eternal Spirit, is, according to Hegel, not an impossible or invalid conception, but rather the expression of the logical idea of reality in its highest and richest form.

We cannot here attempt to enter into or discuss the Hegelian logic as an exposition of the nature or process of thought, though upon this, undoubtedly, the validity or invalidity of the Hegelian absolute idealism, as a rational system of thought, depends.

Its suitability to furnish a metaphysical basis on which to rest the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith may, however, be made the subject of a few remarks.

2. The Pauline affirmation, that in God we "live, and move, and have our being," implies the immanence of God in the material world, and in the finite spirits of men, as source of being and life and knowledge. The

“universal self” of God lives and functions in some deep and real way in the finite selves or spirits of individual men ; yet not in such a way that the life of the “universal self” of God is exhausted in this immanence ; nor yet in such a way that the immanence of God in them takes away or nullifies the individuality and freedom and responsibility of finite spirits. This may be “panentheism,” but it cannot properly be called pantheism so long as the transcendent personality of God and the individual personality and freedom of finite spirits endowed with independent power of volition is maintained. It may be true and Scriptural to say that individual finite spirits, when they live aright, live in God or realise the “universal self” in their thought and volition. It is only by yielding our individual wills up to God, and allowing the “universal self” or Spirit of God to think and will and work in and through us as finite individuals, that we live aright and realise the true end of our being. But there always remains the possibility that individual men may not thus yield themselves up to God, and so realise their own truest self, through surrender to the “universal self.” It is this tragic possibility which gives its seriousness and solemnity to human life. And it is doubtful how far the Hegelian idealism leaves room for this possibility. Of course we get the same difficulty in a thoroughgoing Calvinism or any philosophical theory which, in conceiving of absolute divine sovereignty, lands us in determinism of one sort or another. In this respect Hegelian idealism, with its doctrine of the “universal self,” as operative and realised in the finite spirits of individual men, is neither better nor worse as a philosophical theory than Calvinistic predestinarianism.

3. As to Christology, the Hegelian idealism furnishes a logical ground, in its doctrine of the essential triunity of God, for predicating Deity of Jesus Christ the Perfect Man. For the Logos of God, the second element or principle or person of the triune Godhead, is an essential feature of the Hegelian conception of God.

No doubt the Logos of God is the divine principle or power that is manifested under the form of time in the created world, with man as its crown, and not merely in the historic individual Jesus Christ. But this is not out of harmony with the scriptural representations as to the function of the Word in Creation and Providence. It is sometimes said that according to idealistic philosophy the Incarnation of the Word must be conceived of as taking place in humanity as a whole, and cannot be thought of as realised in an historic individual. But this is not clearly apparent. There seems no reason, on "idealistic" grounds, to deny that the Logos or Word of God, operative in all creation, may in the fulness of time have become fully realised or incarnate in an historic human individual, as the means of becoming ultimately incarnated in a redeemed human society or "Kingdom of God" under that individual as King and Head, which is the scriptural doctrine of Christ's person. The "form" of man, as made in the image of God, furnished a possible tabernacle wherein the Logos of God might become incarnate, and did in fulness of time become incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, the Perfect Sinless Man and Redeemer of His sinful brethren.

The self-consciousness of Jesus when He said: "I and the Father are one"; "I do not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"; "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father," reveals a "self" realised

in human self-conscious life identical with the "universal self" of the divine self-conscious life. Yet this identity of self-hood, as between Christ and the Father, was not incompatible with a certain conscious distinction of being. For Christ distinguishes Himself, as Son, from the Father Who sent Him. The "universal self" of God, as source of thought and feeling and volition, may thus dwell and function in a human self-conscious personality—viz. Jesus Christ—while distinction still remains between the Father and the Son, Who share in this common self-conscious life. This would seem to imply that human personality is not absolutely imperious and exclusive, as Professor A. S. Pringle-Pattison affirms, but that one and the same *self*—the universal self of God—may dwell and function alike in Father and Son through the Eternal Spirit, without yet annulling distinctions of personality or conscious being.

The logic of the "mere understanding," with its hard-and-fast principles of Identity and Contradiction and Excluded Middle, is certainly not adequate to grasp or express in a rational way what Christian faith affirms concerning the relation of Christ and God the Father. If the conception of the triunity of God is to be accepted as a valid form of thought, the Aristotelian "logic" needs revisal.

4. Another point of importance is as to how far Idealism, as a philosophic theory, affords a sufficient ground for attributing "uniqueness" to Jesus Christ as compared with other men. To say that His human personality is rooted in the Divine Logos as eternal ground or source, while undoubtedly true, does not of itself serve to differentiate Him sufficiently from other men. For their being also, according to idealistic philosophy, is grounded in the Divine Logos, Who is the



underlying principle of all creation, and especially of man—creation's crown.

It is a distinction, however, to affirm that the Logos of God, while immanent, and partially realised in men as such, seeing they are made in the image of God, is first *fully* realised or *incarnate* in the perfect man, Christ Jesus, Whose unique and peculiar function it is to be the Redeemer of His sinful fellow-men and the bringer of many sons unto glory.

As perfect and sinless man Christ Jesus is differentiated from His fellow-men by an absolute distinction which belongs to Him alone among men, and constitutes Him Son of God by nature, the Word Incarnate.

But though Son of God by nature, "the effulgence of His glory, and the express image of His person," this does not dehumanise Him or remove Him from the sphere of manhood. Rather it constitutes Him the perfect "Son of Man." For it is man's intended destiny in the divine purpose to be son of God, reflecting, as in an image, the character and will and purpose of the Heavenly Father. This purpose failed of accomplishment in the first man and his natural descendants, in whom, because of sin, the Divine Logos could find no fit tabernacle wherein to become incarnate. But it has been accomplished and realised in Christ the second Adam, that through Him, as historical means, it may be progressively accomplished in a redeemed humanity—the "many sons" whom it is His function as Redeemer to bring to glory. He is Son of God immediately or by nature as the Word Incarnate—the "firstfruit of many brethren." Other men, intended for sonship, but alienated through sin, attain to sonship, with its blessings and privileges, through union with Him as Redeemer, and under Him as King and Head. Thus, Christ's sonship to God



by nature, while it separates Him from sinners, does not unman Him or make Him disparate from His brethren of mankind, who are destined by God for a like sonship in and through Him as historical Redeemer and rightful King in God's Kingdom.

As the ancient Greek Fathers expressed it, "The Divine Logos became what we are (*i.e.* human) in order that we might become what He is (*i.e.* sons of God and sharers in the divine eternal life)." His sonship to God is primary and underived; ours is secondary and derivative, being attained to through union with Him and participation in His Spirit, Which is the Spirit also of His Father.

Through union with Him, we too become one with God the Father as He is. The "universal divine self" comes to live and think, to will and work in us as in Christ our Lord, without thereby destroying or annulling our individuality and distinctness as persons any more than in the case of Christ. And so, while Christ can say "I and the Father are one," the Christian believer learns to say, like Paul, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This view of Christ's relation alike to the Logos of God and to His fellow-men seems to safeguard His uniqueness, while at the same time bringing Him into closest kinship with His brethren of mankind. And it is the view suggested to us by the statements of Scripture.

5. It will be seen, therefore, that Absolute Idealism, as a *philosophic faith*, has much in common with what we find in the New Testament.

But when the attempt is made to draw out and express this idealism in a rational logic, and a metaphysic of reality, many difficulties are met with.

One of these is the difficulty of conceiving of the

“universal self”—God’s self—in relation to the finite “selves” of individual human beings, in such a way as to do justice at once to God’s transcendent self-hood, His immanent presence and activity in the self-conscious experience of all finite spirits who “live, and move, and have their being” in Him, and the personality of individual human beings as something distinct from, though not entirely independent of, the life and personality of God.

God’s transcendent self-conscious existence above all finite “selves” or spirits; God’s immanence in all finite “selves” or spirits as the fountain or source of their true and universally valid knowledge of reality and their *right* volition; the real personal existence and will-power grounding personal responsibility of finite selves or spirits—these are the three factors which must be conserved in any satisfactory metaphysic or ontology.

Professor A. S. Pringle-Pattison (whose conclusions are adopted by Professor Orr), in his “Hegelianism and Personality,” pp. 214–230, submits the idealist doctrine of the universal self to a searching adverse criticism. He maintains that the error, both of Hegelianism and of the allied English doctrine of the Neo-Hegelians, is “the identification of the human and the divine self-consciousness; or, to put it more broadly, the unification of consciousness in a single self.”

He affirms that the “universal self” said to be present and active in the self-conscious experience of all finite spirits, in so far as they think and will aright, is a mere logical abstraction, “an abstraction,” as Professor Orr expresses it, “of the form of self-consciousness in general from the concrete egos in which alone it has reality.”

The idealists, it is said, hypostatise this logical abstraction and translate it into a metaphysical reality—

the absolute ego or universal self of God—thus confusing between logic, or epistemology, and metaphysic, or ontology, which, according to Professor Pringle-Pattison, is the fundamental error of realists, from Plato and Aristotle onwards, through the Scholastic Realists, to Fichte and Hegel and the Neo-Hegelians.

“Each self,” says the Professor, “is a unique existence, which is perfectly impervious to other selves—impervious in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is a faint analogue. The self accordingly resists invasion; in its character of self it refuses to admit another self within itself, and thus be made, as it were, a mere retainer of something else. The unity of things (which is not denied) cannot be properly expressed by making it depend upon a unity of self in all thinkers; for the very characteristic of a self is this exclusiveness.”

Professor Pringle-Pattison quotes with approval Abelard’s nominalistic doctrine as against the realists. “Only individuals exist, and in the individual nothing but the individual.” “When existence is in question, it is the individual, not the universal, that is real.”

This reasoning does not seem to the present writer to be altogether convincing. Professor Pringle-Pattison seeks to do full justice to the third of the above-mentioned factors, viz. the real existence of finite self-conscious spirits as distinct individual persons with individual wills and responsibility. But he fails to do full justice, it would seem, to the second factor, viz. the immanence in all finite selves or spirits of the one ever-living self-conscious Spirit, God, Whose self-consciousness is the norm of all true knowledge of reality, and Whose will is the norm of all right volition. Our Christian consciousness affirms that when we know what is true,

and will and do what is right, it is "God Who worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

Professor Pringle-Pattison's doctrine of "each self as a unique existence which is perfectly impervious to other selves," would seem to leave no room for this truth regarding God's immanence and operation in all finite self-conscious spirits.

This doctrine of the "self" seems to translate the self or ego into a *thing* in space and time impervious to and exclusive of other *things*, which is a strange doctrine. It would seem impossible to conceive of the knowledge possessed by such isolated concrete mutually exclusive "selves" or spirits as a common knowledge of reality valid alike for all. The reason why our knowledge of reality is not something individual and private, valid only for our individual selves, but something universal and valid for all "selves" or minds alike, would seem to be that, in the process called knowledge, finite spirits "live, and have their being" in God, and enter into or unite themselves with that Supreme Mind Who is the source or foundation of reality and the standard of universally valid truth.

Nominalism, with its dictum "Only individuals exist," has a superficial plausibility; but the grip that realism has taken of the minds of the profoundest thinkers, from Plato onwards, would seem to imply that there is more in it than Professor Pringle-Pattison here admits. If realism tends towards pantheism, as the Professor asserts, is it not equally true that nominalism tends towards atheism? If "only individuals exist," and each self is "impervious" and exclusive of all others, are we to conceive of God as such an individual exclusive self alongside of the other impervious "selves" in the

universe? And how is this compatible with God's infinity and all-embracingness as the One in Whom we all "live, and move, and have our being"? Such "pluralism" would seem to reduce God to a unitary individual self, alongside of and external to other selves or spirits, all of which are impervious and mutually exclusive.

A "universe," or system of things in which is unity, would seem to imply one supreme mind in relation to which all things subsist and have their place in the world of reality. And the growth of finite minds in knowledge of reality would seem to be possible only through the immanent presence and working of the one Infinite or Supreme Mind in them.

And how, on the moral and spiritual side, does Professor Pringle-Pattison's doctrine of the impervious concrete self conform with St. Paul's great utterance, "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me"?

The reality of the finite self must indeed be affirmed, but not to the denial or exclusion of the divine immanence.<sup>1</sup>

6. Another difficulty to be met with in formulating a metaphysic on the lines of absolute idealism is the difficulty of finding room for predicating of finite spirits

<sup>1</sup> Dr. George Galloway, in "Principles of Religious Development," pp. 312 ff., offers some interesting criticisms on the Hegelian idea of a universal Divine Self immanent in all particular human selves. "Our contention is," he says, "not that the human mind is an impervious entity, but that there cannot, in some inexplicable way, be within the experience of the self the experience which belongs to a Divine Self." He prefers to postulate as the ultimate ground of all experience a "supreme and self-conscious Will," and says that "the Divine Will can invest its content with a degree of otherness, while it continues to connect and sustain that content in the form of a system of existences which



free will-power and originative causal activity compatibly with the doctrine of the divine immanence and the activity of the "universal self" in all finite selves or spirits.

This difficulty is not less keenly felt by Calvinistic predestinarians in formulating their doctrine of the divine sovereignty, than by Hegelian idealists in formulating a doctrine of the "universal self" in relation to the particular finite "selves" of human individuals. And in both cases the tendency runs strongly in an objectionable pantheistic direction, to the undermining of individual freedom and responsibility and the nullifying of the ethical meaning of life. In fact, the most thoroughgoing modern defenders of Calvinistic predestinarianism, such as the late Professor Hastie, lean upon an Hegelian philosophic idealism to support their case.

The tendency of this mode of thought is to minimise the blameworthiness of sin, and in modern Neo-Calvinists to produce a strong bias in favour of universalism in eschatology. As will be seen from Lecture VII, the writer feels constrained to make a firm stand for the freedom of the human will in the choice between right and wrong—surrender to the Divine Will or resistance to it—as grounding human responsibility and

are individual centres of experience. These centres, by entering into more and more complex interaction, have been the basis on which the conscious (individual) self has developed." This, it seems to me, is not in substance widely different from the Neo-Hegelian conception. For must not the Divine Will, which Dr. Galloway here postulates as all-embracing and all-controlling—though not to the negation of individual centres of experience having a relative independence—be regarded as a faculty of the Divine Self? Is not an existing Self or spiritual Being always behind a Will?



constituting an important factor in determining the issues of life for individuals. Hegel's formulation of his system of absolute idealism seems to leave no room for this. Whether any formulation of an idealistic metaphysic can be reached which will give its due place to human freedom and responsibility, while yet conserving to God—the "universal self"—His rightful sovereignty, may be problematical. The writer would endorse on this point the words used by Professor Flint in his prefatory note to Hastie's "Theology of the Reformed Church," that "although he fully believes in the Bible teaching as to predestination, he does not believe in the metaphysical predestinarianism of Augustine, Calvin, or the Synod of Dort." The "metaphysical predestinarianism" of most Hegelian idealists seems to the writer but little, if at all, more satisfactory than that of Calvin or the Synod of Dort.

"Absolute Idealism," as worked out in detail into a system of thought by Hegel and his disciples, does not, so far as he has been able to master it, seem to the writer to be wholly satisfactory as a synthesis of knowledge, or to furnish an adequate theoretic basis for the religious judgments of Christian faith.

But he knows of no other metaphysic which seems to him more adequate or to come nearer to furnishing a satisfactory rational basis for the affirmations of religious faith. The alternative seems to him to lie between a metaphysic on the lines of absolute idealism, though freed from the defects and errors of "Hegelianism," and an attitude of philosophic "agnosticism" somewhat similar to that of Ritschl and his school.

The scholastic theology, as a system of human thought, rested on a basis of Aristotelian metaphysic which gave it solidity and strength. That foundation has largely

crumbled under the assaults of modern philosophic criticism ; so that, unless our theology is to be left hanging as it were in the air as a system of "value judgments" without theoretic significance or validity, we need to revise the Aristotelian metaphysic, and seek to make it more adequate to express that knowledge which we believe we have as Christians.

Towards this revision of the metaphysical basis underlying our religious faith, the idealism of Hegel and his school furnishes a contribution of no little value. It may not furnish an adequate solution of the problem, but it seems to point in the direction in which a solution is to be sought.

Hegel himself remained till his death in the membership of the Lutheran Church, which showed that, as he understood it, his philosophy was not incompatible with adherence to the fundamental articles of the Christian faith.

How far these fundamental articles of the Christian faith can be heartily accepted and defended by a more modern idealistic philosopher, from the philosophic standpoint of absolute idealism, may be seen from the thoughtful and reverent work of the late Principal John Caird on "The Fundamental Ideas of Christianity."

## NOTE C

### ON THE QUESTION AS TO A BEGINNING OF THE WORLD IN TIME, AND THE RELATION OF THE ETERNAL GOD TO TIME AND THE TEMPORAL PROCESS.

ON this difficult question the following free translation—and abbreviation—of a section in Haering's recent work on dogmatic "*Der Christliche Glaube*" (pp. 330-334) is interesting and suggestive:

"Three main attempts at a solution of the problem of time in relation to God's eternity are found in the history of Christian thought.

"1. The first conceives of God's eternity as negation of time, or as timeless cause of time and all that happens in time. This conception gives its due to that feeling of absolute dependence on God and His sovereign grace which is a prominent feature in the consciousness of the pious believer, and so furnishes us with a thought definite in itself. But it does so at the cost of denying all true reality to history, or the contingent course of events in time. The actual relation of God to the world's course in time—and therewith His love and His wrath, as well as our faith and our sin—exists only subjectively in our way of regarding the matter. In reality, His omnipotence and omniscience embrace all events as necessary, and the world is eternal, like God Himself.

“2. The second attempt at solution conceives of time as a condition of God’s existence as well as of the creature’s. Eternity is conceived of as existence enduring through all time, without beginning and without end.

“This view emphasises indeed, in an expressive way, the real relation of God to time, but at the expense of God’s elevation above all lapse of time, which is equally indispensable to a true conception of God. God becomes, in this view, but like a great and good man. His omnipotence and omniscience are limited by human freedom. The conception of the creation of the world *in time* seems to involve the adding of something to the Being of God at a certain point in time, which would imply a denial of God’s self-containedness and eternal equality with Himself.

“3. A third philosophical attempt to reach a solution is that made by Lotze and others. The true and ultimate Being, it is said, must be thought of as elevated above all lapse of time, but in such a way that in His Being and essence there is a succession of ‘moments’ or determinations—an inner order of conditions of the real. What we call happening in time is the temporal manifestation of this inner order of conditions of the real. Only in the content and inner order or connection of conditions of what is to happen can that which happens be grounded, not in the stream of time.

“For us who are individual members of this connected series of things, the real appears under the form of time, and the present appears as the real. For God, however, the ground of this illusion falls away. He is equally near to every member of the entire reality, and He beholds all in the timeless form of that inner connection of conditions. In this, our faith and our

unbelief are something real or actual for God, and yet God is not drawn into the stream of time. In this, also, free actions have their place, not as not yet existing and future, but as actually existing. God sees them not *beforehand* as something which *will* be, but observes them as belonging to the real, which, in the temporal unfolding of events, have their place at a certain point of the future. And so the old saying, 'God has created the world *with* time' (not *in* time), will appear as an illuminating truth, not as a make-shift of embarrassment.

"One will always look upon such attempts at explanation with personal sympathy. The thinking spirit always feels itself anew constrained to venture on so bold a flight. But it is a vain flight. That sentence, 'God is elevated above all lapse of time, and yet in His Being and essence there is a succession of moments or inner conditions of the real,' is no real solution. For what is the 'succession of moments' here spoken of, other than the 'course of time,' which is supposed to be got rid of or denied in regard to God? Thus the thought which is meant to contain the solution does not escape the same fate as that which it is put forward to take the place of.

"That 'inner order of conditions of the real' which for God is supposed to be eternally present, because He is not, like us, a member of this developing reality, conditioned by all the other members, but equally near to all as the all-embracing condition, the ground of all, is not the same as that temporally determined reality, which we have referred back to it, in order to avoid the difficulties of the conception of time in relation to God.

"We have indeed, on this view, no longer any difficulty



in maintaining God's elevation above time, and yet thinking of Him in a real relation to time—or rather to that which is alleged to be the ground of this form of our perception, that inner order of conditions of the real. But at what cost? We have imperilled or done away with the full reality of the world in its distinction from God, understanding the word reality in the simple sense of our immediate experience. Without noticing it we have slipped over into the first-mentioned attempt at solution.

“What, for example, is that ‘observing of free actions at a certain point of the real’ other than a denial of real freedom? We cannot solve the time-question, because we cannot abstract from time without denying the fundamental presupposition of our finite existence.

“The problem and its insolubility presents itself at a certain height in the spiritual development of mankind and of individuals inevitably and always anew. It is an entirely groundless reproach to bring against the Christian faith that it knows no answer to the question as to the relation of God to time.

This question is brought home more earnestly and personally to the Christian consciousness only because it is bound up with its dearest, highest possession. It has an answer indeed, much better than that of all those who hold up its ignorance as a reproach to it. Not with unwilling compulsion does it submit itself to this limitation of its knowledge, but respects it as something necessary and intelligible, according to its understanding of the revelation of God. It has therefore lost all charm for Christian faith to deceive itself over this point through sophistry and seek ‘to stand at God’s standpoint.’ At God’s standpoint, in so far as this word has a meaning, Christian faith indeed



knows itself to be placed—raised up through God's condescending love.

"But to adjust the difference between God and the world appears to it not only an impious but a senseless undertaking. God would not be God, and the way to God would in this case be opened up to the compelling logical understanding rather than to the personal decision or attitude of heart and will on the part of the individual."

The problem of the relation of eternity and the Eternal God to time and the temporally developing world of things and persons, is indeed the profoundest and most difficult problem of philosophy and theology. It meets us at various points in the theological system, as in the doctrine of predestination, of the origin of sin, of the relation of divine grace to human free-will in conversion, sanctification, etc.

The attempts of the more speculative or philosophical theologians to reach a satisfactory intellectual solution of the questions which arise at these points—such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Calvin, Schleiermacher, Hegel—are wont to lie in the direction of the first-mentioned solution referred to by Haering; those of the more "plain and practical" theologians—such as Pelagius, Abelard, Arminius, Wesley—in the direction of the second solution, which lies nearer to the ordinary popular consciousness. Whether the age-long controversy between these two types of mind will be set at rest by the discovery of some logic and metaphysic more adequate than that of Aristotle to give rational expression to the contents of the Christian consciousness, such as the absolute idealists aspire after and seek to formulate; or whether, like Haering, the wise theologian will cease striving to express his highest religious

faith in such a way as may be harmonised with all his other theoretic knowledge, so as to reach an adequate synthesis of knowledge, and will rest content rather with an historic revelation and a philosophic agnosticism, the future alone will show.

Haering's criticism of the three historic attempts to solve the problem of time in relation to eternity is acute. But when he comes to state his reasons for resting content with an agnostic attitude in presence of a problem which human reason can state, but give no answer to, he is scarcely so convincing.

"We cannot solve the time-problem," he says, "because we cannot abstract from time" (in thinking of real existence) "without denying the presupposition of our finite existence." This dictum has an appearance of convincingness about it; but it requires fuller consideration and examination than Haering gives to it. It seems to be true that we cannot "imagine" real existence in this world except as under the forms of space and time; but it does not follow that our power of validly thinking or conceiving of the real is necessarily conditioned by the forms of space and time, or of time only. Regarding "space" this is perhaps more obvious. We can think validly of a spiritual reality which is not space-filling or conditioned by space. But it may be so as regards the form of time also. Otherwise it would seem that we can have no valid conception or knowledge of God, the Supreme Reality, Who is exalted above time.

If we have or can have a valid rational knowledge of God as infinite and eternal, even though it be a partial and imperfect knowledge, it should not be impossible for us in some way to bring this knowledge into some sort of intelligible relation to our other

knowledge—our knowledge of things in space and temporally developing—so as to reach a unity or synthesis of our knowledge. The hope of reaching such a synthesis lies at the root of our intellectual life and endeavour.

And why should it be, as Haering says, “impious” or “senseless,” to try to “adjust” to the satisfaction of our own minds “the difference between God and the world”? Is there not a danger, if we do not seek to make clear to ourselves this “difference” in a way that satisfies our minds, that we may fall into pantheism, with its intellectual confusions and paralysing moral influence?

It may seem plausible and pious, with Haering, to place the “compelling logical understanding” or reason over against the “personal moral decision” or faith, in speaking of the way that is opened up for us to God; but if the “personal moral decision” of faith is not to rest ultimately on grounds that can satisfy the reason or logical understanding, but on some other kind of grounds, then a rift is produced in our human life, and a dualism introduced into it with which it is very difficult for us to rest satisfied.

#### NOTE D

### ON THE IDEA OF "GAPS" IN BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

SOME Christian theists who accept evolution as at least in large measure true, think it necessary to insist on "gaps" in the evolutionary process at important points, viz. :

(1) At the emergence of life from inorganic non-living matter ;

(2) At the emergence of sentient or conscious animal life from non-sentient, unconscious plant life ;

(3) At the emergence of self-conscious rational life in man from non-rational instinctive animal life as in the lower animals.

As regards the first of these points the theory of biological evolution has nothing to say. Its sphere, as a theory of historical process, is limited to the realm of organised living creatures which reproduce their like by vital process. Such reproduction of like by like, with variations, through genetic vital process, furnishes the theory with the material on which it works. It affords no help towards conceiving how living matter may have emerged from non-living matter. "Spontaneous generation" does not properly come within the scope of the biological theory of evolution at all.

As regards the second and third points it may be

observed that the assumption of a veritable "gap" in the evolutionary process would be a negation altogether of the biological theory of evolution as affording an explanation of the historic process whereby the different species of living creatures have appeared upon this earthly scene. The continuousness of the evolutionary process is necessary if the theory is to have any explanatory value. It is not necessary, indeed, that the various links in the chain should be still extant or capable of being pointed to, but it is necessary to assume that there have been no breaks in the chain, no gaps in the process, otherwise the theory breaks down entirely.

If the first man, or the first pair of human beings, are not assumed to be, as matter of historic fact, the genetic descendants of sub-human animal parents, then the theory of biological evolution is denied at the point which is of most vital interest, and may as well be thrown aside as valueless for explaining the origin of species. The beginning of man upon this earth would then need to be attributed to a special and direct act of creation, and would be unrelated to the preceding manifestation and process of life in this world.

But if evolution is theistically conceived of, it does not seem necessary to suppose any "gaps" or absolute beginnings *de novo* in the process.

No doubt the transition, through genetic descent, from non-sentient plant to sentient animal, and still more the transition from irrational animal, led by instinct, to self-conscious rational man, must have involved big leaps upward in the evolutionary process—the emergence of "variations" in progeny of the greatest magnitude.

The emergence of such significant "variations" in



the genetic process could only be reasonably accounted for by the causal activity in and behind the evolutionary process of an intelligent, purposeful, creative power, at once immanent in and transcendent over the evolving life. But the purposeful activity of such a creative power is as much needed to account for the "minor" variations which have served as steps onward and upward in the evolutionary process as for the "major" variations; for to adduce "chance" as an adequate cause of such purposeful variations is a mere makeshift of embarrassment, and a giving up of rational explanation. The power active in the vital process of reproduction is, after all, the power of God, the ultimate Reality, the Source of all life. And it is the same intelligent, purposeful power of the immanent and transcendent God which gives rise in the progeny so produced to those variations which lead to the onward and upward movement in the evolutionary process of life.

But if the power of God be thus present in the process of reproduction, with its accompanying variations, then we can conceive of these "variations" as being small or great according as God's purpose requires. And while the process must be conceived of as "continuous"—through continuous reproductive activity—yet the "variations" in the progeny need not always have been slight or almost imperceptible. They can be conceived of as being just as slight or as great as the purposeful intelligence at work in the process plans and wills them to be. There may have been "leaps" upward at various stages, when parents of a low type or grade of life gave birth to children markedly higher in the scale of being and richer in the qualities of life than they themselves. Such a leap upwards may have marked the transition from the parent plants to the first speci-



mens of dimly conscious animals that emerged from them; and still more manifestly such a "leap" upwards must have marked the emergence of the first man, or the first human pair, from the sub-human parents that gave them birth.

Yet there need have been no "gap" or break in the reproductive activity and the evolutionary process. The creative activity of Almighty God, which underlies all evolution, could produce the first ancestors of our human race out of the loins of brute-like ancestors, through the act of reproduction, as easily as in any other conceivable way. Without that purposeful creative activity the emergence of man, whether by evolution or in any other way, is altogether inexplicable.

The late Professor Henry Drummond, in his book on the "Ascent of Man," is emphatic in repudiating the idea of "gaps" in the evolutionary process as inconsistent with the conception of evolution altogether, and unnecessary to safeguard man's dignity, if evolution be theistically conceived of. The distinction some would draw between a "merely natural" continuous evolution to which certain changes and developments in the manifestation of life may be attributed, and upward movement through "gaps" or "breaks" in the process of "natural evolution,"—at which "gaps" only, the creative activity of God comes in to produce something new,—Drummond decisively rejects. He needs God, he says, as the cause and explanation of the process at every stage all along the line. To bring Him in only at the so-called "gaps" or conspicuous upward steps is to rob Him of His due.

Professor James Orr, who has written at much length and with much knowledge and relevance about evolution

in his various works, is somewhat vague and undecided in this connection. He does not succeed in making it quite clear whether he regards a theory of continuous evolution, even if theistically conceived of, as compatible with the Christian view of man's nature and dignity and destiny. He criticises with much force various forms of the evolutionary theory which are unsatisfactory and do not fit the facts to be explained.

From some passages one would gather that he is not entirely opposed to evolution as a theory of the process of man's becoming, if only God is admitted to be behind it, and the possibility is admitted that the transitions from one link to the next in the evolutionary process may have been not slight and almost imperceptible, as Darwin's theory required, but conspicuous, and what might be called paroxysmal.

From other passages one would gather that Dr. Orr regards the idea that the ancestors of the human race are genetically descended from sub-human progenitors—which of course is implied in any theory of evolution, however theistically conceived of—as altogether untenable, and incompatible with the Christian view of man's nature and constitution and fall into sin.

In one passage he dwells on the need for a "pair" of human beings—male and female—at the beginning of human history as a difficulty in the way of explaining man's origin by evolution from some lower animal. "Do we always consider," he asks, "the difficulty which this creates for a purely evolutionary theory?—that it is not *one* being only evolution has to produce, but a pair; a first pair; the male and female counterparts of each other. To some it may seem a simple matter; to me it appears that, with all our philosophy, the production of a first human pair remains as much a mystery

of the laboratory of nature as before evolution was heard of." <sup>1</sup>

This passage, and others that might be quoted, would seem to point to a rejection of the theory of evolution *in toto*, as Professor Orr's goal, for of course the difficulty about the production of a first pair by evolution applies to other lower species of animals as well as to man.

Yet, on the other hand, we have such passages as these: "No religious interest, I may take it for granted, is imperilled by a theory of evolution viewed simply as a method of creation, provided certain conditions are fulfilled and certain limits are observed. It may be—I at least am not concerned to deny it—that, within limits which science must define for us, there has been organic evolution—genetic derivation of one order or species of living beings from another. . . . The convergence of many lines of evidence has satisfied the great majority of scientific men at the present day that it is so." <sup>2</sup>

Or again: "There is no necessary antagonism between theism and a doctrine of organic evolution as such. That species should have arisen by a method of derivation from some primeval germ (or germs) rather than by unrelated creations, is not only not inconceivable, but may even commend itself as a higher and more worthy conception of the divine working than the older hypothesis. Assume God—as many devout evolutionists do—to be immanent in the evolutionary process, and His intelligence and purpose to be expressed in it; then evolution, so far from conflicting with theism, may become a new and heightened form of the theistic argument." <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Orr, "God's Image in Man," p. 153.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

This seems clear enough. Yet in dealing with the theory of evolution in detail, and especially in dealing with its bearings on the doctrine of the fall of man and the beginning of sin, Professor Orr seems to assume a more antagonistic attitude towards the theory in general, or at least to any evolutionary conception of the origin of our "first parents," such as would make them the progeny of ape-like or other sub-human ancestors.<sup>2</sup>

The assumption of a veritable "gap" or breach with antecedent evolution at the emergence of man, such as Professor Orr seems to lean to, though without very clear affirmation of it, amounts in effect to a rejection of the evolution theory altogether.

<sup>1</sup> "God's Image in Man," note vi, p. 298.

## NOTE E

### ON THEORIES WHICH MAKE SIN A NECESSITY

OF theories which explain sin as necessarily emerging in the course of human development we may distinguish four types or varieties, viz. :

(1) Pessimistic theories, which seek the ground of sin and evil in the original constitution of the world.

(2) Dualistic theories, which explain sin as arising from an ultimate power or principle coeternal with and over against God.

(3) Sensuous or evolutionary theories, which explain sin as due to the constitution of man's nature as a sensuous being, gradually developing towards rationality from the brute condition.

(4) Metaphysical theories, which explain sin as arising from the limitation of finite being, or as a necessary stage in the normal development of spirit due ultimately to the predetermining almighty will of God.

1. The pessimistic theory is illustrated in Buddhism and in modern pessimistic philosophies like those of Schopenhauer and Hartmann, according to which the greatest of all evils is just the world as existing, and the root-evil for each individual is his having been born into the world.

Escape from sin and evil, and true blessedness, on this view, can only be reached by returning into nothingness, or Nirvana, out of the miserable condition of actual conscious existence.



2. The dualistic theory finds illustration in the religion of Zoroaster, which assumes a super-human power of evil, Ahriman, coeternal with Ormuzd, the power of good, and finds in the world and in man a root of evil due to Ahriman as well as reason and goodness due to Ormuzd. Manichæism, with its doctrine of an eternal devil, under which Augustine was held captive for years, is a form of dualism similar to that found in Zoroastrianism.

So, too, the Platonic and Gnostic theories that evil had its root in matter, which is conceived of as coeternal with God, are dualistic. These theories attempt to explain the emergence of sin in human experience, but they are not properly theories explaining the origin of evil, because they maintain that evil had no origin, but is coeternal with God and goodness.

3. Closely akin to the dualistic theory in its Greek form is the sensuous theory which is associated with the modern evolutionary view of man's origin, and is widely popular.

According to this view, man has emerged gradually, by almost imperceptible stages, from the merely animal or bestial condition, in which the appetites and desires of the animal nature are strongly developed and rule the actions, to the rational condition, in which these appetites and desires are regulated and controlled by reason.

A fall into sin is regarded as a necessary stage in this evolution, a necessary precondition of the attainment of moral self-control. An evolution according to which man appeared upon the scene by a sudden leap, as it were, out of the loins of sub-human ancestors, with a rational self-consciousness and power of self-determination and of discrimination between right



and wrong, such as is presupposed in the primitive state of man as described in Scripture, is supposed to be inconceivable and impossible. Yet it is no more inconceivable or impossible than any other upward step in the evolutionary process, which requires God in it and behind it to make it intelligible. Man must have begun to be somehow, and it is as easy to conceive of his beginning to be as an innocent, self-conscious, morally responsible creature, whether produced by evolution or by a direct creative act, as to conceive of his beginning to be in that nebulous, indefinite, intermediate condition between a brute and a rational being which the sensuous theory inclines to. Pfeleiderer claims St. Paul's support for the sensuous theory of the origin of sin on the ground of his doctrine concerning the flesh as the principle or root of sin. It is supposed that by the contrast between the flesh and the spirit Paul means simply that between the body and the soul or the animal and rational parts of human nature. In that case Paul's ascription of all sin to the flesh, as its source and seat, would be equivalent to an ascription of it to the animal part of man, which is the essence of the sensuous theory.

A careful examination, however, of the meaning of the term flesh in Scripture, and especially as used by St. Paul, makes it plain that he did not identify the "flesh" with the animal or sensuous side of man's nature, and that he had no sympathy with gnostic or ascetic views which depreciated the body as the seat or source of sin.

Among the works and characteristics of the flesh he mentions things that have no connection with sensuality or the body, such as enmities, strife, factions, party spirit, self-righteousness, spiritual pride.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gal. v. 20 ; Phil. iii. 4-6.

The flesh with St. Paul denotes, not the animal part of man, but human nature as a whole, regarded as fallen and sinful and opposed to the holiness of God.

That he did not have any sympathy with the dualism which sees in the body, as material, the seat and source of sin, is evident from his emphatic teaching as to the sacredness of the body, and of all its natural appetites and functions,<sup>1</sup> and as to the future resurrection of the body.<sup>2</sup>

In the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans he gives his view of the cause of sin's having come into the world, which is quite contrary to the sensuous theory.

4. The metaphysical theory is illustrated in Hegel's working out of his system of absolute idealism, as also in the predestinarian theories of Augustine and Calvin and Schleiermacher.

According to Hegel, "knowledge, as the disannulling of the unity of nature, is the fall, which is no casual exception, but the eternal history of spirit. For the state of innocence—the paradisaical condition—is that of the brute. The 'fall' is therefore the eternal mythus of man; in fact, the very transition by which he becomes man. Sin is the negation of the immediate unity of man and nature in the experience of mere sense-perception—the innocence of the pristine state—but only that the negation may be in turn negated, and the true destination of spirit be realised."<sup>3</sup>

There is but little essential difference between this view and that of thoroughgoing metaphysical predestinarians, who, in affirming and maintaining the

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. vi. 7, etc.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. xv.

<sup>3</sup> Hegel, "Religionsphilosophie," vol. i. pp. 268-9; vol. ii. pp. 258-265.

divine sovereignty, think it necessary to deny true causal activity to the finite human will. The only real causality on this view is the almighty, all-determining will of God, Who decrees sin as well as all else, because it is the necessary precondition of that moral victory which is the thing of absolute worth and the desirable goal of creation. This conclusion may be covered up and concealed by a cloud of words, but it is the necessary logical conclusion of a thoroughgoing philosophical determinism.

Melanchthon separated himself ultimately both from Luther and Calvin, after sundry waverings, on this point, and affirmed a power of self-determination as belonging to the finite human will, at least to the extent of perversely resisting or freely yielding to the constraining influence of divine grace, without which it is impossible for man to attain to salvation.

Kant and his philosophical disciples are also firm in maintaining the undetermined freedom, or self-determining power, of the finite human will. Not that the finite human will can resist the divine will to any other effect than self-injury, ruin, and ultimate perdition. But this power of possible resistance God Himself has given to it, as the necessary precondition of the attainment of a kingdom of willing subjects and children, which is His goal in world-history.

Schleiermacher, with his pantheistic leanings, affirmed a thoroughgoing predestinarianism, but with a "universalistic," not a "dualistic" eschatological issue, such as Calvin had affirmed.

Mr. William Temple, son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, in a recent work on "The Faith and Modern Thought," seems to incline towards a thoroughgoing determinist doctrine, according to which God has decreed

evil because it is the necessary precondition of the good He wishes to see realised. "If you take all the evil out of the world," he says, "you will remove the possibility of the best thing in life. . . . Evil is precisely that with which no spirit can rest content; and yet it is the condition—not the accidental, but the essential condition—of what is in and for itself the best thing in life, namely moral victory."<sup>1</sup> "If there is any ground discoverable for saying that the history of the world is really a continuous and progressive moral victory, then it will appear that all the evil, bad as it is, and precisely because it is so bad, is an element in the total goodness of the whole. . . . If victory is good, and if victorious spiritual excellence is something better than an untroubled innocence, then, granted that the evil is overcome, it is better that it should first exist."<sup>2</sup> This seems to point in the direction of universalism, though the writer does not deal expressly with the question as to final issues.

Modern predestinarians of a thoroughgoing type tend, like Schleiermacher and the late Professor Hastie of Glasgow, towards a universalistic eschatology.

Professor Orr, in his "Progress of Dogma,"<sup>3</sup> defends Augustinian and Calvinistic predestinarianism, but with qualifications and admissions of "difficulties that can never be altogether removed."<sup>4</sup>

The late Professor Candlish, in his "Christian Doctrine of God," deals gently with "the theory of determinism or philosophical necessity as held by many able and estimable modern theologians, such as Edwards and

<sup>1</sup> "The Faith and Modern Thought," pp. 118, 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>3</sup> "Progress of Dogma," Lectures V and IX.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 170.

Chalmers," but affirms his opinion that, as held by modern philosophers, "it does not leave sufficient room for the freedom and responsibility of man ; and while it removes the difficulty as to the foreknowledge of free acts, it raises a greater one ; for if man's acts are certainly determined by motives arising from their characters and circumstances, since these are ultimately due to the creation and providence of God, it is not easy to explain how, as all Christians must believe, His causality is excluded from evil."<sup>1</sup>

If God's causality is to be excluded from evil, this can only be by attributing a true causality to the finite human will which is inconsistent with a thoroughgoing metaphysical predestinarianism.

All theories which make sin a necessity in human development tend, in the writer's opinion, to diminish or altogether remove the blameworthiness of sin as that which "ought not to be" ; and in this they run counter, not only to the teaching of Scripture, but to the ethical self-judgment of the majority of mankind, whose consciences tell them plainly that they are personally responsible and blameworthy for the evil volitions which issue in evil acts and evil habits.

<sup>1</sup> Candlish, "Doctrine of God," p. 51.



## NOTE F

### ON MODERN THEORIES OF THE PERSON OF CHRIST

MODERN Christological theories on Protestant ground may be grouped into two main classes, viz. :

(1) Those which rest ultimately on a Unitarian conception of God and reject the idea of an essential Trinity, including the conception of a pre-existing Divine Logos, as ground of explanation of the person of Christ ; and

(2) Those which rest ultimately on a Trinitarian conception of God's essential Being, and make use of the idea of the pre-existing Divine Logos as ground of explanation of Christ's unique divine-human person.

Of the former class of theories, those of frankly Socinian or Unitarian modern theologians—such as Channing and Parker in America, Martineau and Carpenter in England, and Schmiedel in Switzerland—may be taken as forming one group, in which Deity is denied to Jesus Christ ; while those of Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Rothe, Beyschlag, and others in Germany may be taken as another group, in which Deity or Divinity, in a modified sense, though not in the full sense of the ancient Catholic creeds, is attributed to Christ. Of the latter class of theories, those of Kenotic theologians may be taken as forming one group, and those of Dorner, Du Bose, and similar writers as another.



I. (1) The frankly Unitarian theologians of modern times occupy practically the same position as Socinus in regard to the person of Christ. They proclaim Him to be simply a good man—it may be the best of men that has ever lived—but not truly divine, or one who is a proper and original object of religious faith or worship. That should be reserved for God alone. The man Christ Jesus was filled in an exceptional measure with the Holy Spirit of God, as other good men, in their measure, have also been indwelt by the Spirit of God ; but this does not constitute Him divine, nor make Him absolutely unique among men, nor a fit object of religious worship.

(2) Schleiermacher, while rejecting or dispensing with the idea of an essential Trinity and a divine pre-existing Logos, seeks to find ground for attributing divinity to Jesus, in a sense, in His human activity and influence. No hypothesis of pre-existence, or of a transcendent metaphysical ground in the essential Being of God, is needed, according to Schleiermacher, to account for the person and work and influence of Christ, but simply God's indwelling through the Holy Spirit in an historic human individual, whose history begins with His appearance on this earth.

The perfect love and faithfulness and success with which Jesus lived His human life in obedient fellowship with the holy God, and in entire sympathy with His fellow-men, was due to the indwelling presence of God in Him, and constitutes the supreme revelation of God to men. Through connection with Him by faith, His life is communicated to us, so that we also become objects of the divine good pleasure and are redeemed from sin. As perfect Revealer of God to men, and Reconciler of sinful men to God, Jesus may

be called the Son of God, and divine, and accorded worship as such.

(3) Ritschl develops Schleiermacher's idea that the unique greatness and glory of Christ as divine and worthy of our worship is to be grounded, not on any transcendent metaphysical basis, or Logos doctrine, but simply on His historic human activity and influence—His perfect fulfilment of the work of His vocation as Revealer of God the Father to men, and Reconciler of men to God.

Inasmuch as Jesus makes the final aim of the Father—viz. the Kingdom of God—His life-aim, and further, inasmuch as in the carrying out of His calling Jesus maintains His independence over against the world, so reflecting God's power over the world, He manifests the characteristics of Godhead in a human life, and may thus be fittingly worshipped as Divine, as Representative and Revealer of God on earth. He has for us the "value" of God.

But we must give up all attempt to explain Christ's becoming from God, or to ground His person in the essential nature of God. That leads up to metaphysic, and the attempt to grasp the truth of ultimate being, for which, according to Ritschl, our minds are incompetent.

(4) Rothe, while boldly speculative, and not averse to metaphysic like Ritschl, rejects the idea of an essential Trinity in favour of a somewhat vague monarchian conception of God as one—the Almighty Father. He thinks he can find ground for attributing divinity and uniqueness to Christ's person by conceiving of the one God, the Father, as gradually communicating His own fulness, in a spiritual and ethical way, to the man Christ Jesus in the course of His earthly career, so that He

becomes a God-filled man, and thus Son of God and worthy of worship at the hands of His fellows.

The dualism of the divine and human still remains unovercome on this view. Christ is not God incarnate as conceived of in Scripture and believed in by the Church, but rather a God-filled man, capable of revealing God the Father to His fellow-men and of reconciling them to God by His teaching and work.

(5) Beyschlag seeks to find a ground for the uniqueness and divinity of Christ by conceiving of the idea of perfect manhood or of "the ideal man" as existing in the mind of God from all eternity and becoming actual in the historic personality of Jesus.

It is not made clear by Beyschlag, however, why, when the idea of "perfect manhood" pre-existent in the mind of God becomes realised in an historic human individual, this individual should, on that account, be hailed and worshipped as "God manifest in the flesh." He is rather "ideal man" manifested in the flesh, but it remains to be shown that "ideal man" is also in a true sense God. The mere pre-existence of the "ideal man," as an idea of the divine mind, does not necessarily imply that the actualisation of this idea in history constitutes a divine being, any more than the actualisation of any other idea of the divine mind which is realised in time—such as the idea of the world, or of the Church, or of a tree or a horse—constitutes these divine beings.

Beyschlag would need to postulate the Divine Logos as eternally real in the essential Triune Being of God, and to establish a satisfactory relationship of coincidence between his pre-existent "ideal man" and the eternally real Divine Logos, ere his view of the historic Jesus as the "ideal man," realised under the form of time, would

suffice to establish His Deity. And in that case there would be no essential difference between the description of Jesus as "the ideal man realised," and as "the Divine Logos incarnate," which the ancient Catholic creed affirms. All theories which dispense with the doctrine of an essential Trinity or Triunity of the Divine Being fail to furnish an adequate ground for attributing true Deity to Jesus Christ.

II. (1) Of modern theories of the person of Christ which rest ultimately on the metaphysical conception of an essential Trinity or triune Being of God, the first group is that of the kenoticists, who seek, in various ways, to explain or make intelligible the Incarnation by the help of the idea of a self-emptying or kenosis<sup>1</sup> of the Divine Logos in becoming incarnate in the person of Christ.

(a) One section of kenoticists conceive of the incarnation as involving an actual self-depotentiation of the Divine Logos in becoming man. Thomasius, Delitzsch, Kahnis, and others conceive of the Divine Logos as giving up His divine position in relation to the world, and laying aside for a time some of the attributes of divine being without abandoning the essential elements of His divine nature in becoming incarnate.

Others, such as Gess, Godet, and Hofmann, go further, and think of the Logos as losing His proper divine self-consciousness by a single act of voluntary self-surrender, once for all effected at the Incarnation, whereby He becomes metamorphosed into a real and limited human soul, differing from other human souls mainly by the fact of having become human through voluntary self-surrender.

(b) A second section of kenoticists, such as Ebrard,

<sup>1</sup> Phil. ii. 5-8.

Martensen, and others, conceive of the self-emptying in a modified way, not as actual depotentialisation or real abandonment by the Logos of the divine attributes in becoming man, but rather as a voluntary veiling or concealment of the divine presence and power under the form of humanity. God the Logos was pleased thus, for our sake, to veil or conceal His divine glory under a human form, and to maintain this veiling or concealment of His omnipotence and omniscience by voluntary act all throughout His earthly life.

Among English-speaking theologians the "kenotic" theory, in one form or another, has been widely accepted. Thus, Dr. W. N. Clarke, in his "Outline of Christian Theology," accepts the idea of a self-kenosis of the Divine Logos in becoming man, contending that, while it is inconceivable that the finite should become infinite or man become God, it is not inconceivable that the infinite should have that power of self-limitation which is implied in God's becoming immanent in the finite world, and ultimately incarnate in the perfect man Jesus Christ. *Infinitum capax finiti* is the principle of Christian theism.

So too, Principal Forsyth, in his recent work on "The Person and Place of Jesus Christ," defends the theory of kenosis, and endeavours to show by human analogies how it is conceivable that the Eternal Son might, by a supreme initial act of moral self-surrender, voluntarily place Himself under the limiting conditions of a human life, from a motive of love, without ceasing to be God; and how, in such decisive act of voluntary self-limitation for man's sake, the divine attribute of love is supremely manifested and not concealed. Even the divine attributes of omnipotence and omniscience Dr. Forsyth conceives of as not renounced or done away



with in the Incarnation, but rather as reduced or retracted to a new form or mode, viz. the form of "potentiality."

Thus the attribute of omniscience, in its eternal form, is an intuitive and simultaneous knowledge of all things; but when the eternal enters time it becomes a discursive and successive knowledge, with the *power* to know all things, only *potential*, and enlarging to become actual under the moral conditions that govern human growth and the extension of human knowledge. Here we have, not so much the renunciation of attributes, nor yet their conscious possession and continuous voluntary concealment, as rather the *retraction* of their mode of being from actual to potential by a single initial act of voluntary self-emptying at the Incarnation. And the history of Christ's growth is then a history of *moral redintegration*—the history of the recovery, by gradual moral conquest, of the mode of being from which, by a great moral act of self-humiliation, for man's sake, He came.

The self-emptying involved in the Incarnation is followed up by the "plerosis" or self-fulfilment in the resurrection and exaltation of the Son of Man.

Various objections have been taken to the "kenotic" theories. The idea of actual depotentiation, it has been truly said, imperils the vital interest of God's unchangeableness, and at most rescues essential Deity, not for the historical Redeemer, in the form of flesh, but only for the pre-existent and exalted Christ.

The idea of voluntary veiling or concealment or retraction of divine attributes has also been objected to as involving the contradiction of a nature which at once is and is not—which asserts itself in the very act of denying itself. And further, this idea of veiling



or concealment is open to the objection that instead of a *manifestation* of God it turns the person and life of Christ rather into a concealment of God ; it makes Him to be not God *manifest* in the flesh, but rather God disguised or hidden and concealed under the form of flesh.

It seems also to transform that whole wondrous life which we have been accustomed to regard as the perfect ideal of moral excellence, into something docetic and unreal, a scenic or fictitious display—a deceptive appearance of liability to human infirmity in one who is really at the very moment possessed of superhuman power and knowledge which he is voluntarily concealing. The divine element in Christ's person, on this view, still remains apart from the human, and only utilises the human as an artificial and temporary disguise.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Forsyth's presentation of the kenotic theory is a strenuous attempt to meet and overcome objections such as these by modifications of the theory which bring it into close approximation to the next class of theories.

(2) The second group of modern theories of the person of Christ, resting on the basis of a Trinitarian conception of God's essential Being, is that to which speculative theologians, with Hegelian or idealistic philosophical tendencies, such as Dorner and Du Bose, belong.

Their aim is so to express the kinship or affinity of God and man—so to relate the conception of the *Divine Logos* as an eternal principle of God's Being to the conception of "*ideal manhood*"—that the Logos may be thought of as becoming man without thereby becoming either depotentiated or disguised or concealed.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Caird, "Fundamental Ideas of Christianity," vol. ii, pp. 127-134.

The Divine Logos, it is said, as an eternal and essential element or principle in the triune Being of the Eternal God, looks towards and includes self-realisation in actual humanity in the fulness of time.

There is thus no disparateness or mutual exclusiveness between the Divine Logos and the form of humanity. For the form of humanity has been prepared and designed from the first, by the eternal wisdom, to be the medium for the self-expression and self-revelation of the Divine Logos under the conditions of time and history. This is what is meant by the doctrine that man was made in the image of God.

The Divine Logos—the self-revealing, self-manifesting power of God—seeks self-expression or self-realisation in the temporally developing world from the first, and has been progressively unfolding Himself in world-history from the beginning. For His nature is love, and love is essentially self-revealing. He is before all things, and all things were made by Him, and in Him all things have their consistence. The created world of things and animals is, so far, an embodiment or self-expression of the Divine Logos. It has its reason or ground of existence in the Logos. Still more is this the case with regard to man, creation's crown. The first man was made after "the image of God." The Logos of God, the active principle or power at work in all creation and evolution, sought adequate self-expression in this head of a new race of living beings predestined to divine sonship.

But through sin and perversity on the part of this first natural head of the human race, the Divine Logos could not become perfectly revealed or expressed in him or his sinful descendants. In Christ, the second Adam, however, linked as He is to the natural head

of the race by genetic descent, yet also marking a new beginning in history for a renewed and restored humanity, the Logos of God has become fully expressed or incarnate historically, and that without surrender of any qualities or attributes essential to His Being as Logos ; because the Logos of God is just that principle or person of the Divine Being which seeks and finds realisation in a perfected manhood.

Dorner conceives of the Divine Logos as an eternal principle or power of the Divine Being, distinct from though inseparably connected with the principle that constitutes the Fatherhood of God, and the principle that constitutes the Holy Spirit and grounds His operation.

These three principles are eternal in the Divine Being, but are not to be conceived of as "three severed subjects with separate self-consciousness and divided self-determination,"<sup>1</sup> which would be tritheism. Rather are they to be conceived of as together constituting one self-conscious eternal Divine Life or Triune Being Who is self-manifested in the works of creation and providence, the movements of history, and the spiritual development of man, creation's crown.

The Logos principle or power in this living, personal, triune God, is the principle that underlies and is manifested in the world of material things, of living sentient creatures, and more clearly and fully in man. This Logos principle is constitutive of the human personality of Jesus Christ, in Whom the Word—immanently present in some measure in all men as the "Light that lighteth every man"—was "made flesh."

He, as perfect or ideal man, incarnates the Divine

<sup>1</sup> Dorner, "System of Christian Doctrine," I. pp. 382, 383, Engl. Transl.,

Logos in a perfect though progressive way, in so far as a growing individual human personality can embody and express the divine nature. In a sense the incarnation of the Logos is indeed complete in the historic person of Jesus from the first, even in His infancy ; for it is the Logos which, in a unique way, unparalleled in the case of any other human being, has come to constitute the personality of this new head of the human race.

Yet none the less is Christ's a truly human personality, capable of growth and development. Because of this latter fact, there is a sense in which the Incarnation may be regarded as progressively realised in the growing development of Christ Jesus as an individual man, and of the Church of redeemed men, which is His body. In this He continues to dwell upon earth, and through it He continues to work towards the fulfilment of the divine moral world-purpose, viz. the coming in fulness of the Kingdom of God.

Dorner's idea of a progressive unfolding or manifestation of the Incarnation of the Word in Christ, applying not only to Christ's earthly lifetime, but to His continued activity and self-manifestation in His body, the Church, brings his view into closer approximation to the "kenotic" theory as represented by Forsyth. The full presence and power of the Divine Logos can only be conceived of as present in the unconscious babe of Bethlehem and the growing child of Nazareth, "potentially," as Forsyth expresses it; so that some idea of "retraction to potentiality" of the divine attributes of the Logos at the beginning of Christ's earthly career seems necessary for intelligibility.

The "moral redintegration" spoken of by Dr. Forsyth as characterising Christ's human life on earth, corre-

sponds, in effect, with Dorner's idea of Christ, as a child and youth and man, gradually, by ethical human endeavour, uniting Himself with, or becoming possessed by, the Logos, which was constitutive of His personality from the first.

The most recent efforts of Christology, such as that of Du Bose in his "Era of the Œcumenical Councils," and Sanday in his "Christologies, Ancient and Modern," are more or less in the direction of Dorner's thought.

Sanday makes use of the hypothesis of a sub-conscious "self" in us all, and the phenomena of the sub-conscious life as dealt with in recent psychologies, for helping to throw some light on the problem of Christ's wonderful personality and the relation of His ordinary limited human consciousness to the Divine Logos-consciousness, which also was His.

Professor Orr looks with hope towards a clearer elucidation of the affinity between divine and human nature as helping towards a satisfactory constructive doctrine of Christ's person.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Christian View of God and the World," p. 284.



## NOTE G

### ON MODERN THEORIES OF THE REDEMPTIVE WORK OF CHRIST

AMONG modern Protestant theologians three types of theory in regard to the significance and efficacy of Christ's redeeming work, including His death on the cross, find support in various quarters, viz. :

- (1) The objective "penal satisfaction" theory ;
- (2) The subjective "moral influence" theory ; and
- (3) The "mystical" theory.

I. The objective "penal satisfaction" theory, which views Christ's death as expiatory in character—as rendering satisfaction to the majesty of the law of God—is still the most widely accepted view. In all the great Protestant creeds there is enshrined, in some form of words, the testimony that Christ offered up Himself as a sacrifice "to satisfy divine justice." First clearly enunciated, though in thought-forms and language too much borrowed from the commercial sphere, by Anselm of Canterbury in his "Cur Deus Homo ?", this "penal satisfaction" theory was further developed by Bernard and Thomas Aquinas, and adopted by the Reformed theologians generally. It got a modified, and in some ways unsatisfactory, expression, in the "acceptilation" theory of Duns Scotus, and the "governmental" theory of Grotius and others ; and in the "Auburn Declaration," adopted by the Presby-



terian Churches of America in 1870, it has received a careful and well-balanced expression in the following words: "The sufferings of Christ were not symbolical, governmental, and instructive only, but were truly vicarious, *i.e.* a substitute for the punishment due to transgressors, and while Christ did not suffer the literal penalty of the law, including remorse of conscience and the pains of hell, He did offer a sacrifice which Infinite Wisdom saw to be a full equivalent. And by virtue of this atonement, overtures of mercy are sincerely made to the race, and salvation secured to all who believe."

Professors Orr and Denney are among the most prominent advocates and defenders of this "juridical" aspect of Christ's saving work among modern English-speaking Protestant theologians. Professor Denney especially, in his books on the "Death of Christ" and the "Atonement and the Modern Mind," has done much towards removing difficulties connected with this theory, and commending it to the mind, both as scriptural and as harmonisable with right views of God and man and their relations.

Professor Orr endeavours to show, in an interesting discussion of the theory put forward in Scotland by Dr. John McLeod Campbell, that this famous Scottish "heretic," whose views on the Atonement were supposed to diverge seriously from Confessional teaching, really, in the end, comes round to a view of Christ's sufferings and death, and their atoning value, as the "Amen" from the heart of humanity to God's just condemnation of sin, which is in essence identical with the old "penal satisfaction" theory.<sup>1</sup>

II. The subjective "moral influence" theory, iden-

<sup>1</sup> Orr, "Christian View of God and the World," p. 358.

tified with the name of Abelard, the opponent of Anselm, has been revived in various forms by modern theologians, to explain the significance and worth of Christ's incarnation and death, with a view to reconcile men to God.

On this view the efficacy of the sacrifice of the cross is supposed to be, not in any effect it has in the way of "satisfying divine justice," which needs no such satisfaction, but in its power to exhibit impressively the divine love to sinful men, and thus to melt the hard heart and lead the sinner to put away fear and distrust and look up to the God and Father of Jesus Christ as a God of infinite love, from Whom there is nothing to fear. The Socinians or Unitarians of modern times, and Broad Church theologians generally, who conceive of man's sonship to God as already fully constituted by the creative act, and as incapable of being forfeited or lost or unattained to, incline towards a "moral influence" theory of Christ's redeeming work of one kind or another.

III. The third type of theory, which I have called the "mystical," is a modern revival of the somewhat vague and nebulous views expressed by some of the early Greek Fathers, such as Irenæus, Clement, and Athanasius, as to the incarnation and its effect.

Theologians of a "mystical" tendency feel repelled by the legal formulæ, juridical ideas, and struggle after logical clearness and definiteness, which is characteristic of Western theology, and seek to revive the view suggested by those Greek Fathers, with whom the Incarnation or union of the divine and human in the person of Christ is in itself the atonement or at-one-ment of God and man, and the pledge or guarantee for such an at-one-ment being extended throughout humanity generally.

No special stress, on this view, is laid on the death of Christ, as mediating forgiveness or atonement. The interpretative idea on which this "mystical" theory is based would seem to be borrowed from the sphere of vital process, biology, or therapeutics, rather than from the commercial or juridical spheres. By becoming incarnate in human flesh the Son of God has effected and exhibited in His own person a union between the divine and the human, and thus *potentially* brought about an at-one-ment.

A new healing, restorative, vital influence has thereby been introduced into decadent humanity, which is thus redeemed from corruption and made partaker of incorruptibility. "The Word of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, did through His transcendent love become what we are, that He might make us to be even what He is Himself."<sup>1</sup>

The atonement exhibited primarily in Christ's person becomes realised in us also as we become one with Him by faith and become partakers of His Spirit.

Christ's death on the cross is part of the "atonement" effected by Him, not as serving to give expression to the divine condemnation of human sin, or to satisfy divine justice, but rather inasmuch as it serves to exhibit that perfect obedience even to the uttermost, under the conditions of human life in which at-one-ment or reconciliation with God finds expression.

A good illustration of the modern revival of this ancient Greek patristic view of Christ's redemptive work is seen in a recent popular book on "How Christ Saves Us," by Archdeacon Wilson. "Men," he says, "are being led to regard the Incarnation—that is, the whole earthly life of our Lord, the manifestation of

<sup>1</sup> Irenæus, "Against Heresies," Bk. V., Preface.

God in the person of Jesus Christ—as the identification of the human and divine life, and therefore as in itself constituting the Atonement. In other words, a complete union of the human and divine life was manifested in the person of the historic Christ, and this union is thus revealed as in its degree existent for all men. Christ has by His own experience explained the relation of man to God. It is that of union, not of separation. Christ is therefore the atonement; and the manifestation of God in Christ was speedily followed, and has been continuously followed, by His manifestations through the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men.”<sup>1</sup>

The archdeacon strives hard to attach a special significance to the suffering and death of Christ as ministering towards atonement, while denying any penal character to His suffering and death. But his argument under this head lacks clearness and convincingness. In one passage, where he says that “sin is the cause of the necessity to suffer,”<sup>2</sup> he seems to admit the essentially *penal* character of Christ’s suffering and death; but he does not work this out in any way to its logical results.

Somewhat similar is the view taken of the efficacy of Christ’s redemptive work by Mr. Temple in his recent book on “The Faith and Modern Thought.”

Mr. Temple frankly repudiates the idea of retributive punishment for the mere vindication of justice, as being to him an idea “wholly without foundation,”<sup>3</sup> though in this he must be aware that he has a mass of modern philosophic thought, from Kant onwards, against him. He has indeed a brief passage in which he says: “If

<sup>1</sup> “How Christ Saves Us,” pp. 67–8, popular edition.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 140.

the cross is the symbol of the pain our sin inflicts on God, it is thereby the symbol of the antagonism between sin and God. Between sin and His nature there is utter enmity, and only through what we see in the agony and death is He victorious.”<sup>1</sup> But the thought underlying this somewhat vague passage is not wrought out to any logical conclusion, else it might have led the author towards the recognition of a “vindicatory” or “penal” element in the sacrificial death endured by Christ our Lord as Representative and Head of our sinful race.

Most modern theologians who reject the vicarious “penal satisfaction” theory of Christ’s redemptive work as too external and juridical a conception, seek to combine, in some way, a “mystical” objective element with the subjective “moral influence” idea, and lay stress on the importance of the believer’s identification of Himself with Christ by faith as an essential element in redemption. This thought of the “mystical union” of the believer with Christ is a true and important scriptural thought, and must be recognised in any adequate setting forth of the work of redemption, though the exclusion of the idea of a satisfaction rendered to Divine justice by Christ for men, through the voluntary vicarious endurance of penal evil due to human sin, seems to the writer to be a coming short of the fulness of the scriptural doctrine on this great theme.

As Professor Orr, in his excellent chapter on the “Incarnation and Redemption from Sin” in the “Christian View of God and the World,” points out, the early Greek Fathers rightly lay stress on the Incarnation as the entrance of a new divine life into humanity,

<sup>1</sup> Op. cit., p. 141.



for its healing or restoration. Schleiermacher and his school rightly emphasise the *representative* character of Christ as the typical man and Head of a redeemed humanity, and insist on the importance of the idea of *fellowship* with Christ as an element of the Christian salvation. Bushnell rightly emphasises the fact of the organic relation of Christ with all the members of the race, in virtue of which He entered, in the most real and vital way, by *sympathy*, into the fellowship of our sin and suffering, and truly bore us on His heart before God as a merciful and faithful High Priest. Ritschl rightly emphasises the idea of a vocation which Christ had as founder of the Kingdom of God on earth, to which vocation He was utterly faithful, even under the final testing experience of death. F. D. Maurice rightly emphasises the fact of a holy and perfect and continuous surrender of Christ's will to God, as an offering, through the Eternal Spirit, in humanity, of that which man ought to render, but is unable in his own strength to give.

But all these true aspects of the redemptive work of Christ need to be supplemented, if we are to reach the fulness of the Scripture doctrine, by the recognition of "a dealing with God in reference to the guilt of sin, which is not simply a sympathetic realisation of the burden of that guilt as it rests on us, nor yet simply a confession of sins in our name, nor yet simply an acknowledgment in humanity of the righteousness of God in visiting our sins with wrath and judgment, but is a positive entrance into the penal evils of our condition, and, above all, into death, as the last and most terrible of these evils, in order that in these also He might become one with us, and under that experience might render to God what was due to His judicial



righteousness—an atonement which, as Dr. McLeod Campbell says, has in it an 'Amen' from the depths of our humanity towards the righteous judgment of God on our sins."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Orr, "Christian View of God and the World," p. 365.

## NOTE H

### ON THE PLACE OF HUMAN FREE-WILL IN THE APPROPRIATION OF THE CHRISTIAN REDEMPTION

THE question as to the place of human free-will in the appropriation of the Christian redemption, and the relation between human freedom and divine grace in this matter, has been the subject of prolonged controversy within the Church.

The views put forward at various times on this subject may be grouped under three main headings, viz :

(1) Extreme Libertarianism, which lays exclusive or exaggerated stress on human causality in bringing about the salvation of individuals ;

(2) Thoroughgoing Determinism or Predestinarianism, which lays exclusive stress on the divine causality in the matter.

(3) Synergism, in one form or another, which affirms the divine will and the individual finite human will as co-operating causes leading to the result.

I. Of extreme Libertarianism, Pelagius, the opponent of Augustine in the fourth century, may be taken as the typical example, though among the early Greek Fathers views were expressed as to the place of human free-will, in the appropriation of redemption, similar to those more fully and systematically unfolded in

the theology of Pelagius.<sup>1</sup> Pelagius so emphasised free-will in man that he made it practically the source of all good in those who attain to salvation and goodness. The corruption of man's whole nature, including the enslavement of his will through the entrance of sin, was denied. Man, as possessing free-will, was held to be capable, by exercise of this, of rising to all goodness. Divine grace was only needed to assist, in an outward way, by teaching and example, such as is furnished especially in the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. Internal operations of divine grace within the soul were regarded as unnecessary and irreconcilable with man's inward freedom. Evil example due to sin has indeed a baneful influence on free moral beings, but not such as to annul human freedom or take away the possibility of such a use of freedom as effects salvation.

This view tended to minimise the evil fruits of sin, and to magnify human self-sufficiency and foster self-righteousness. It was strenuously combated by Augustine in the interests of gospel humility and pious dependence on God's grace for all good.

Semi-Pelagianism was a modified form of Pelagianism introduced into the mediæval Romish Church, largely through the influence of Gregory the Great; and it came ultimately to be the prevalent doctrine in that Church.

According to this view, the *beginning* of the good work in man is made by human freedom, and its completion and perfecting is effected by divine grace. Man, in his natural condition, is conceived of as having freedom to prepare or dispose himself for divine grace,

<sup>1</sup> Athanas. Cont. Gent. 4; Cont. Av. III. 66; Cyril, Cat. IV. 19, 21. See the remarks in Fisher, "History of Doctrine," pp. 164, 165; and Harnack, D.G., 146 *sq.*

to make himself fit for and worthy to receive it and its blessings. Divine grace, bestowed especially through the sacraments of the Church, completes and perfects the work thus begun by human freedom. There is, in this connection, an alternating between divine and human causality, but no true union.

II. Thoroughgoing philosophical determinism or predestinarianism has its roots as regards Christian theology in the teaching of Augustine, though he has not carried it out as a theory so logically or consistently as some of his followers.

He allowed an ultimate human causality—a true free-will or undetermined power of choice between right and wrong—to Adam before the fall (which is inconsistent with a thoroughgoing determinist doctrine), but maintained that since the fall, and as the result of sin, man's nature has become so corrupted, and his will so enslaved by evil, that he no longer has free-will or power to choose what is right or good. His will can only go forth towards what is evil and wrong. Hence, if salvation of sinners is to be effected, it must be entirely and exclusively a work of divine grace. Only those are saved who are overmastered, so to speak, by the irresistible power of divine grace and inspired with good volition. Observation and experience show that this does not take place in all, but only in a portion of mankind. These are the *elect*, whereas the others, being left by divine grace in the *massa perditionis*, to which all equally belong through sin, perish inevitably, because irresistible grace being particular, not universal, has not chosen them.

Augustine put forward his view in order to do full justice to the teaching of Scripture as to the pervasive, corrupting, enslaving power of sin, and to the humble

believer's sense of dependence on divine grace for everything that is good in him. And in this connection Augustinianism has served an important purpose in producing, deepening, and maintaining Christian piety.

It has been sought to mitigate the difficulty of conceiving of man's will in the matter of appropriating redemption as *determined* ultimately by irresistible divine grace (which apparently does away with human self-determination and responsibility), by affirming that God determines the individual human will, not in any *physical* or *mechanical* way, but by means of influences such as act through his intellectual and moral nature by conceptions, emotions, affections, and the like. Man's will, it is said, is not *forced* or determined by any necessity of nature or external compulsion. This does not, however, get over the difficulty. It makes little difference by what sort of means the individual's will is *determined* by a causality other than the individual himself, if it *is* so determined. For if it is so determined by any causality other than the individual himself, then it is difficult to see how the individual can be regarded as a free agent or as morally responsible.

Calvin, and the Reformers generally, revived the Augustinian predestinarian doctrine as against the semi-Pelagianism then current in the Roman Catholic Church. Calvin himself was somewhat hesitating and inconclusive as regards the free-will of Adam before the fall, which Augustine had sought to conserve as furnishing the basis of human responsibility.

The more thoroughgoing and consistent philosophical determinists or predestinarians, however, such as Beza and Gomarus, adopted the logical supralapsarian doctrine which attributed the fall of Adam, and the



whole subsequent historical development of the race, to the divine causality—the operation of the eternal, predetermining divine decrees.

III. Synergism was the name given to the doctrine on this subject first propounded by Luther's colleague, Melanchthon, the subtlest theologian of the Lutheran Reformation. Melanchthon at first agreed with Luther in denying human free-will—*liberum arbitrium*—as a philosophical fiction. After long pondering and reflection, however, he veered round from this position as unethical, and advanced, with increasing definiteness, to the rejection of absolute predestination, teaching that man, even as sinful, has still so much of *liberum arbitrium* that he is able either to close with divine grace as preveniently brought to bear on him, or to resist and reject this grace.

According to Melanchthon, three factors must co-operate in the work of salvation, viz. the Word of God, the Holy Spirit, and human free-will or *liberum arbitrium* which must not maintain a merely passive attitude, but can and ought to close with divine grace. Hence the name, "Synergism," given by his opponents to Melanchthon's doctrine, because he left to man a remnant of *liberum arbitrium* in spiritual matters, even in reference to the beginning.

This name suggests the idea that human free-will produces or contributes some element of good in the matter of salvation, alongside of, or in addition to, divine grace, which is akin to the semi-Pelagian view of the matter. But this idea, which tends to minister somewhat to human self-complacency or self-righteousness, though it may be found in some of the cruder presentations of "synergist" doctrine, is not an essential feature of Melanchthon's view. He does



not attribute to human freedom, in the initial decisive act, any working along with grace of a positive or productive kind, such as might afford ground for human merit or self-righteousness, but merely a yielding or self-surrender to grace, or a ceasing to resist the Holy Spirit, Who does all the positive or productive work in the matter.

There can be no merit that a man can boast of in the mere act of closing with, or yielding to, divine saving grace, especially when the preparation and enabling power to make such decision are recognised as being due to prevenient divine grace. But there is manifest blameworthiness in resisting and refusing to yield to God and His grace when the power of free choice and voluntary self-surrender is there. The view of Melanchthon has come to prevail generally in the modern Lutheran Church, and is ably maintained by modern Lutheran theologians, such as Martensen.

The view later put forward by Arminius, who headed a revolt against extreme Calvinism within the Reformed Church in Holland during the seventeenth century, and was condemned by the Synod of Dort, resembles Melanchthon's view in denying the irresistibility of grace; but it is mixed up with views as to predestination being conditioned by divine foreknowledge of free human decisions and actions, and as to the continuous emissibility of divine grace, and consequent instability of the Christian character, which render it unacceptable as a theological system to many who sympathise with its protest against a thoroughgoing metaphysical predestinarianism.

The Westminster Confession of Faith takes up a somewhat balanced attitude in regard to divine and human causality, though with a leaning towards a

thoroughgoing determinism or metaphysical predestinarianism, which has been a stumbling-block to some. It sets down side by side affirmations that are apparently contradictory, without attempt at rational reconciliation or solution.

Thus it affirms concerning the divine causality:

"God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will freely ordain whatsoever comes to pass"; but it goes on to add: "yet so as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures, nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established."

It affirms that God "permitted" sin, having purposed to order it to His own glory. But it expressly denies that sin is to be attributed to God's causal agency, or that He is its author. This leaves sin apparently without a cause, unless man's will can be a cause of that which is not caused by God.

Of man's free-will it says: "God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity of nature determined, to good or evil."

This would seem to imply a non-determinist doctrine of human freedom, at least as regards man's original state and constitution. And this is confirmed by the next statement that "man, in his state of innocency, had freedom and power to will and to do that which is good and well-pleasing to God; but yet mutably, so that he might fall from it." This is not a thoroughgoing supralapsarian determinist doctrine.

If such free self-determining power or original causal efficiency could belong to man in his primitive condition, it cannot be alleged that the possession

by finite spirits of this power of original, undetermined causality is inconsistent with the divine sovereignty; and if such causality is continued to man in his fallen state, to the extent at least of enabling him either to yield to or to resist and reject divine grace, this too cannot be alleged to be inconsistent with the divine sovereignty.

In regard to the power of man's will in the fallen state, the Confession is clear in affirming that the sinner, having "lost all ability of will to any spiritual good," is "not able by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself thereunto"—this last phrase being directed against semi-Pelagianism. It affirms also that the sinner is "enabled freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good" by God's grace alone.

With all this Melancthon would heartily agree. He would say that, if the sinner yields to God's prevenient grace, reaching Him through the Gospel call and the inward strivings of God's Spirit, then it is by God's grace he is freed from his natural bondage under sin and enabled freely "to will and to do that which is spiritually good."

But what if the sinner resists the Spirit and rejects the Gospel call? This is possible, as experience shows. Are we to ascribe such sad result to a decree of "reprobation," or "praeterition," on the part of God, Who "is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"? <sup>1</sup>

The Confession of Faith, in chap. III. § iii, seems to affirm this, and it is here especially that some find difficulty in following its teaching. It is to meet this felt difficulty that most Reformed Churches, which hold

<sup>1</sup> 2 Peter iii. 9; cf. Ezek. xxxiii. 11; 1 Tim. ii. 4, etc.

the Westminster Confession still as a subordinate standard, have adopted Declaratory Acts, in which some such statement is found as that made in the Declaratory Act adopted by the Free Church of Scotland in 1892, viz. :

“This Church holds that all who hear the Gospel are warranted and required to believe to the saving of their souls ; and that in the case of such as do not believe, but perish in their sins, the issue is due to their own rejection of the Gospel call.”

“Their own rejection ” ! That would seem to fix the responsibility, not on any preordaining decree of reprobation, but on the mysterious ultimate causality of the individual human will.



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